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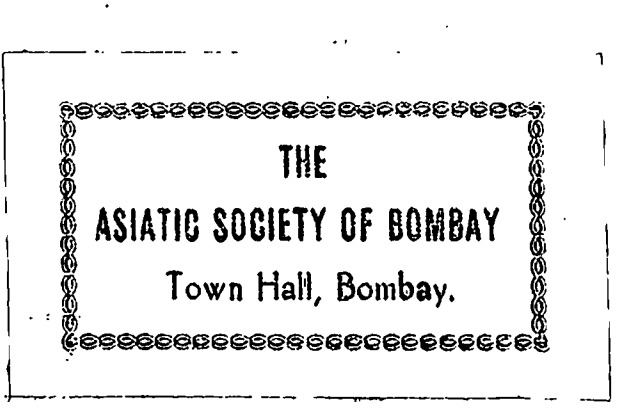

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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

REIGN OF GEORGE III.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A VIEW OF THE PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLAND,

IN PROSPERITY AND STRENGTH,

TO

THE ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY.

3 1584

BY ROBERT BISSET, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF THE LIFE OF BURKE, &c. &c.

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length prove victorious — insurrection crushed — tranquillity restored — loud complaints against the Lord Mayor. — Parliament resumes its functions. — Supplies. — Session rises. — Parliament dissolved.

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1779. Character of a statesman.

AMONG the various considerations that enter into our estimates of the conduct and character of statesmen, there are two to which we may safely resort as just tests of executorial ability: the first is general and comprehensive, and depends on the principles which direct their thoughts and actions; the second is particular, and modified by the existing case. The former of these tests consists in the nature and tendency of the objects pursued, and means employed in the whole system of their policy, according to the fitness of which we are enabled to characterise their administration as a series; the latter, in the nature and tendency of specific ends and measures, which relate merely to the circumstances of the time: according to the choice and adaptation of these, we appretiate any given part of an administration. It would be erroneous and feeble reasoning, to infer, from the want of one species of talent, the absence of every other. There have been ministers, to whose proceedings we could not apply the first of these standards, as they were evidently guided by no fixed principles of political science, and directed to no determinate objects of pursuit, or concerted plan of conduct, whose actions have been isolated experiments for extrication from special difficulties, and not the result of any systematic policy for general security against evil, or for the advancement of good. Though such men could not be consummate statesmen, yet might they exert, in the invention of expedients, very considerable ingenuity. In reviewing the policy of the successive counsellors concerned in our disputes with America, and considering the value of the objects, and the efficacy of the means, an attempt to discover

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discover grand, comprehensive, and beneficially practicable principles and schemes would be vain. Ministers had reasoned and acted as political empirics, and had even evinced themselves deficient in the limited experience to which an empiric trusts. Their proceedings not only proved them devoid of political wisdom, but of common information, on very obvious cases, which it behoved them to have thoroughly investigated. It is easy to see that combined wisdom and magnanimity might have avoided the American war; by abstaining from imposts less productive, than advantages which were enjoyed before their enactment; by concession, when more profitable than coërcion; by voluntary grants, more glorious than attempts to exact; or if conciliatory offers of renewed intercourse availed nothing, by rather totally abandoning the object, than persisting in it through means to which the value of the end was so little proportionate. By not preventing the American contest, the British government afforded an opportunity for the Bourbon ambition to bring on the French and Spanish wars; and thus far a retrospect of ministerial conduct justified a conclusion, that their policy was, in its nature, feeble, inconsistent, and unwise, and in its effect, prejudicial to the country; but when we trace their counsels and measures after we were actually involved in those evils, we find that it frequently possessed the secondary merit of lessening the evils which had been produced by themselves. In the late campaign, the most threatening which Britain had ever experienced, the preparations of ministers had warded off the dangers: the resistance of Great Britain to a mighty combination, filled European spectators with astonishment and respect; her resources seemed to grow with her necessities, and in no part of the world was her naval or military glory obscured. If many considered ministers as the ultimate authors of our miseries, yet not a few of these admitted their recent

General view of lord North's administration.

Arduous struggle in which Britain was engaged.

Her resources grow from her calls, and her efforts rise with her difficulties.

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recent exertions for defending the country to have been powerful; and, in viewing our actual situation, great numbers either overlooked or forgot the cause. Resentment and indignation against our enemies absorbed all thoughts of the impolicy which had enabled their malignity to operate. Patriotism called aloud, let us punish our foes, and defend ourselves; and prudence said, reflections on the causes of our state are now too late, our first care ought to be, to discover the means of extrication from our difficulties. Such were the sentiments which prevailed in Britain; and if they implied no strong approbation of ministers, they contained at least little new reprehension. During the recess of parliament, some partial changes took place in the ministry: the earl of Gower, lord president of the council, resigned that high office, and was succeeded by the earl of Bathurst; the earl of Hillsborough was appointed secretary of state for the southern department, in the room of lord Weymouth; lord Stormont for the northern, lately occupied by lord Suffolk: but the three chief ministers who presided over the treasury, American and naval affairs, continued to hold their offices.

Meeting of parliament.

PARLIAMENT met on the 25th of November. The speech from the throne observed, that we were called upon by every principle of duty, and every consideration of interest, to exert our united efforts in the support and defence of our country, attacked by an unjust and unprovoked war, and contending with one of the most dangerous confederacies that ever was formed against the crown and people of Great Britain. Here our king presented a description of his subjects, which was applicable to loyal, patriotic, and magnanimous Britons, then, and in all ages.

The king's speech.

"I know the character of my brave people; the menaces of their enemies, and the approach of danger, have no other effect on their minds, but to animate their courage, and to call forth that national

spirit, which has so often checked and defeated the projects of ambition and injustice, and enabled the British fleets and armies to protect their country, to vindicate their rights, and at the same time to uphold and preserve the liberties of Europe." In exhorting his parliament to persevere in such efforts as would maintain the defence and security, and promote the common strength, wealth, and interest of all his dominions, he particularly recommended to their deliberations the state of Ireland.

Extraordinary amendment proposed to the address.

An amendment of a very extraordinary nature was moved to the address; its purport was, to contrast the situation of this country when his majesty ascended the throne, with its present state when the twentieth year of his reign had commenced; and in a very copious and minute detail, which included the principal events of the reign, it professed to exhibit the outset, progress, and result, and represented our condition as then prosperous, but now adverse; the prospect as then splendid, but now gloomy: imputing the alleged alteration to a change in the plans of government, it proposed to leave the new, and return to the old system. Presenting to the sovereign a dismal picture of his dominions, it declared that, in the opinion of its proposers, parliament would betray both their king and country, if they did not distinctly state to his majesty, that nothing but new counsels and new counsellors could prevent the consummation of public ruin. In this projected remonstrance, the members of opposition departed from the tone which they had usually assumed, and demonstrated that they had now framed a much more general plan of operations, than in any of their former hostilities against ministers. They perceived that the public, in contemplating existing situations, began to forget the series of past events; and to recal these to the minds of the people, seems to have been the chief object of the proposition which they now offered to

Views of opposition.

 parliament.

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Plan of systematic attack on ministers,

under three general heads,

to be respectively carried on under the conduct of Messrs. Burke, Dunning, and Fox.

parliament. Never was more ability displayed by any parliamentary opposition, than in the plan of the minority this session; or more judgment, than in distributing the parts of the execution according to the talents of the principal leaders. They undertook to prove, first in general principle, and afterwards in detail, that the system of government was radically and completely wrong, and that a total change was necessary for the salvation of the country. The changes were proposed to take place in three different departments, economical, constitutional, and executorial. The expanded and philosophical mind of Burke was employed in grand schemes of political economy, so much the subject of analysis and deduction, since the publication of Smith's profound work; and of practical comparison, from the exertions of Neckar in the neighbouring kingdom. The preservation of the constitution, and the correction of alleged abuses in that admirable system, was the province assigned to him, whose vigorous and acute mind, enriched with legal knowledge, sharpened by forensic contention, and enlarged by senatorial deliberation, had chosen for its principal object the support of constitutional law and practice: to watch the balance of the orders, to correct the preponderancy in either scale, was the task assigned to Mr. Dunning: while the powerful and comprehensive genius, the penetrating sagacity, the bold and intrepid spirit, the luminous, forcible, and impressive eloquence of Mr. Fox, were employed on the executorial conduct of ministers. The efforts, therefore, of opposition, besides various and separate objects of attack, were this session principally directed to political economy, the balance of the constitution, and the conduct of administration, under three distinguished leaders respectively, Messrs. Burke, Dunning, and Fox. The speeches in support of the amendment, contained outlines of proceedings, which occupied them during the

the session. After exhibiting the present reign in an historical series to the commencement of the preceding campaign, they went over the various operations, and endeavoured to demonstrate, that, in the whole and every part of their conduct, ministers had shewn themselves totally unfit for their offices. This preliminary debate equalled the highest oratorial efforts which had ever been employed in the British senate; but its result was unfavourable to the ablest speakers; opposition were outvoted by a majority of two hundred and thirty-three to one hundred and thirty-four in the house of commons, and eighty to forty-one in the house of lords.

State of Ireland.

After the preliminary contention, the first object of opposition was the state of Ireland. It was understood, that during the recess a plan was to have been formed for giving our fellow-subjects such satisfaction as might equally conduce to the welfare of the sister-kingdom and Britain. Members of opposition now censured ministers for not having taken effectual steps to satisfy the Irish nation. They drew a melancholy picture of the condition of Ireland, before its first application to the British parliament in 1778: they described the sentiments disappointment had excited in that kingdom, and the subsequent proceedings which had resulted from calamity and discontent. Separated from the exaggerations of orators, the following was the actual state of affairs:

Alarming associations.

associations against the purchase and use of British manufactures, and for the encouragement, in every possible degree, of their own, had already taken place. At first these had only been partial, but now they were become universal, and the non-importation and non-consumption agreements included the usual penalties or denunciations of vengeance, not only against violators, but against those importers or sellers of the prohibited commodities who had not acceded to the general compact: to these had been joined associations of a very different nature,

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and to the apprehensions already described had been lately added the imminent danger of foreign invasion; a measure which was evidently intended, if not absolutely avowed, by France; and this situation was the more alarming, as the military force supported by Ireland had been continually drained off and weakened by the American war. In order to provide for their defence, they said it must be placed in those who were the most deeply interested in its success. The state was unable, or unwilling, to defend them effectually; and the mode of defence, which was unequal to their protection, might be ruinous to their liberties. Military societies were renewed, and their spirit became universal. They declared that they were designed for the double purpose of defending their safety against foreign enemies, and their rights against domestic injustice. They affirmed that they were loyal to the king, and affectionate to Britain; but that it was with the loyalty and affection consistent with their own liberty and prosperity. In every part of the kingdom were seen to arise, as it were by magic, vast bodies of citizens serving at their own charges, choosing their own officers, who had been trained to great expertness, and obeying with exemplary regularity and steadiness. No nobleman or gentleman could shew his face in the country, who did not fall in (which they did generally, and for the most part cheerfully) with the prevalent disposition of the inferior and middling classes of their countrymen. After having provided for their defence against foreign enemies[a], the Irish began to look towards their rights, or claims of rights, and in general declared the authority of the British parliament over them to be a flagrant usurpation. This state of things was not the work of a party, or of any particular set of men, but was produced and

[a] See Annual Register, 1780.

upheld

upheld by every rank, class, and denomination of people. A free and unlimited commerce with the whole world, was the first, the great, and general object of redress, for which no compensation could be admitted, and without which no other concessions or advantages, however great and beneficial, could afford satisfaction. This was the *sine qua non*, from which there was no departure. Such was the state of affairs in Ireland; and during the recess of the British parliament, the Irish lawgivers shewed themselves inspired with the spirit of the nation. They declared in their addresses to the throne, that nothing less than a free and unlimited trade could save the country from ruin. From these facts, opposition in both houses endeavoured to prove, that the deplorable and alarming condition of Ireland arose from the misconduct of ministers, in not having adopted measures for its relief; and made motions, charging them with criminal negligence respecting the sister-kingdom. This accusation was powerfully supported by lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox in their respective houses; ministers, without attempting to refute the statements, made a very able defence of their own conduct. They strongly contended, that the condition of Ireland was owing to causes over which they had no control. In this part of the defence, the forcible and well-directed understanding of Mr. Dundas was employed in vindicating administration; and exhibited a clear and masterly view of the defective system of our commercial policy respecting Ireland, in which her miseries originated many years before the appointment of the present ministers, and before the present reign. The restrictions imposed in the general system of our trade-laws were conceived in prejudice, and founded in ignorance and impolicy; but the prejudices were so strengthened by time, and confirmed by the habits of a century, that they appeared at length to have become a part of our very

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very constitution, which affected members of parliament as well as all ranks of the people; and thence the attempt made in the two preceding sessions to obtain only a moderate relaxation, met with the most determined opposition. The few who undertook the invidious task, finding themselves obliged to encounter prejudice without, as well as petitions and pleadings at the bar, were at length overborne by numbers. Distresses, which arose from the frame of our commercial policy, and the errors of public opinion, it was illiberal and unjust to impute to the servants of the executive government. From the charge of negligence, in not having formed a plan of relief during the recess, lord North himself undertook the defence of ministry. Notwithstanding the multiplicity of other affairs in which they were occupied, they had actually bestowed much time and attention in collecting information, and forming a plan for the relief of Ireland; in a week, however, he should be ready to bring forward propositions for that purpose.

Lord North's plan for granting them satisfaction.

Accordingly, on the 13th of December, he opened his scheme, and proposed; first, to repeal the laws which prohibited the exportation of Irish woollen manufactures from Ireland to any part of Europe: secondly, that so much of the act of the 19th George II. as prohibits the importation of glass into Ireland, except of British manufacture, or to export glass from that kingdom, should be repealed: and, thirdly, that Ireland should be suffered to carry on a trade of export and import to and from the British colonies in America and the West Indies, and her settlements on the coast of Africa, subject to such limitations, regulations, restrictions, and duties, as the parliament of Ireland should impose. The system of the minister was received with great satisfaction, and even applause, by opposition.

His introductory speech, with very great ability, accurate and extensive knowledge, exhibited a

view of the state of Ireland and its causes, the necessity of amending its condition, and the principles which he proposed to apply as most conducive to the purpose. Bills founded on the two first propositions were accordingly introduced, passed both houses without any contest, and received the royal assent before the recess. The third, more complex in its nature, and requiring a great variety of investigation, was postponed till after the holidays; not only that time might be afforded for discussion, but that it might be known how the new measures affected the Irish. It passed in the month of February, 1780. These acts, imparting in so great a degree the benefit of a free trade, were received with rapturous gratitude by the warm hearts of the generous Irish. Instead of being dictated by colleagues of more imperious dispositions and narrower capacities, this wise and liberal plan resulted from lord North's own heart and understanding; and, by restoring harmony in disputes between branches of the same community, demonstrated that conciliation is much sounder policy than coërcion.

1779. Bills passed for that purpose.

1780.

Among the various subjects of animadversion on the conduct of ministry, the waste of public money this session occupied more than even its usual attention. Provision for the national service originates in the representatives of the people; an inquiry, however, into the application of the sums that have been voted, is certainly not foreign to the lords, who are a branch of the legislature; and consist of so great proprietors, proportionably affected by increase of impost: accordingly, peers in opposition took a very active share in endeavouring to scrutinize expenditure, and lessen profusion. The duke of Richmond and lord Shelburne charged ministers with the greatest prodigality, and respectively made motions of inquiry, intended to be prefatory to others which should embrace the whole

Motions in the house of peers by the duke of Richmond and earl Shelburne respecting

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1780. the profusion of public money.

whole circle of expenditure. The duke of Richmond laid down, as the basis of the proposed scrutiny, a few strong and comprehensive propositions: that by the infatuation of government, we were engaged in wars which necessarily demanded immense sums of money; that ministers ought, by the most rigid possible economy, to moderate enormous evils of their own creation; so far were they from exercising the frugality incumbent on all managers of the public money, but more especially on those to whose folly and misconduct the cost was owing, that unbounded prodigality was evident in the civil list, the army, the navy, and the ordnance, the four great sources of national expence; the people groaned under the burdens imposed on them for a supply to ministerial profusion: our chief rival was, under her skilful and upright financier, contracting her expenditure, while we, under our incapable and corrupt stewards, were increasing ours beyond all precedents of history, and all possibility of longer endurance.[b] From these grounds inferring that either economy or ruin was the alternative, he proposed to commence the reform with the reduction of the civil list, and moved an address to his majesty, praying him to set the example; representing, that from relieving the miseries of a distressed people, his crown would derive a lustre superior to any which could arise from external splendor; and that even after the requested curtailment, sufficient means would be left for every rational and beneficial purpose of regal magnificence. Ministerial peers admitted that there had been *some* want of frugality during the present administration; but whatever system of economy might be adopted, it should not begin with the crown, the splendor of which should be maintained, as including all the dignity and honour of the empire. It would be inconsistent and

[b] See Parliamentary Debates for 1780, duke of Richmond's motion for economical reform.

unjust

unjust in parliament to withdraw from the king that which had been unanimously granted. Lord Thurlow, with his masculine force of understanding, and acuteness of professional habits, encountered the motion more closely than any of the other peers. The proposition was founded on the alleged distresses of the people; the fact had not been established, it rested merely on his grace's assertion; if the miseries did exist, and did arise from public prodigality, the department in which it prevailed ought to be specified, and the alleged extravagance proved, that the remedy might be applied to the actual evil: were the cure to be an application of the civil list, the motion proposing merely a reduction, without specifying its extent, was vague and nugatory; it was impossible to understand its exact import; the house could not vote for an indefinite requisition. These arguments prevailed, and the motion was rejected by a majority of seventy-seven to thirty-six. Proceeding on the same general principle, the earl of Shelburne proposed to inquire into the extraordinaries of the army; he took an historical view of the sums expended under that head, of the armies supported, victories and advantages obtained, from the beginning of king William's war to the peace of Paris, and demonstrated that the sums charged in the accounts of 1779, were one million more upon that article than in any year of our former wars. After a detail illustrating ministerial prodigality, he moved a resolution, that the alarming addition annually made under the head of extraordinaries, required immediate check and control; but the motion was negatived by a considerable majority.

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THE issue of these propositions for reducing the national expenditure, caused very great discontents in various parts of England. The enormous expence of our establishments, from the war, and from waste, began to be severely felt in the nation, and awakened the attention of the metropolis and

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Petitions from Yorkshire and London.

the different counties. Yorkshire and London, the chief districts of landed and monied property, took the lead in expressing alarm, petitioned parliament, and were followed by other corporations. The petition of the county of York, comprehensive in its object, explicit in its avowals, strong though temperate in its language, constitutional in its principles, exact and circumstantial in its detail, was the model on which other applications were formed. The nation, it set forth, had for several years been engaged in a very expensive and unfortunate war. Many of our valuable colonies had declared themselves independent, and formed a strict confederacy with our most inveterate enemies; the consequence of these combined misfortunes was a large addition to the national debt, a heavy accumulation of taxes, with a rapid decline of the trade, manufactures, and land-rents of the kingdom. Alarmed at the diminished resources and growing burdens of the country, and convinced that rigid frugality was now necessary for the salvation of the state, they observed with grief, that many individuals enjoyed sinecure places with exorbitant emoluments, and pensions unmerited by public service. They conceived the true end of every legitimate government to be the welfare of the community, and that the British constitution, which seeks the public good, peculiarly entrusts the national purse to the house of commons; and represented, that until effectual measures were taken to redress these grievances, by suppressing useless donatives, and preventing unnecessary and extravagant largesses, the grant of any additional sum of money, beyond the produce of the present taxes, would be injurious to the rights and property of the people, and derogatory from the honour and dignity of parliament. This petition was introduced by sir George Saville, the disinterested and patriotic member of that great, industrious, and opulent

opulent county. With much good sense, plain and perspicuous reasoning, he supported the representation, and urged the necessity of giving it a favourable attention. Ministers did not object to the propriety of receiving this address; but, by postponing the consideration of its complaints, they eventually defeated its purpose. 1780.

Mr. Burke undertakes the cause of public economy.

THESE discussions concerning public expenditure were preludes to the celebrated plan of economical reform which was introduced this session by Mr. Edmund Burke. Before the recess, this philosophical orator delivered a speech, in which he exhibited the action and re-action of public profusion and corrupt influence; reviewed the present expences and general establishments; stated principles, and expounded details, in order to ascertain utility. He intimated, that soon after the holidays, he would bring forward a plan for the reduction of public expenditure. Able men of all parties, knowing the immense grasp of the author's capacity, the extent and compass of his legislative views, the fullness and accuracy of his knowledge, the variety and novelty of his illustrations, waited with anxious expectation for the performance of his promise; ministers and their friends, anticipated statements and arguments which they would not receive with conviction, at least with pleasure and approbation; nevertheless, they assured themselves of philosophy, eloquence, and poetic imagery, which would fill them with delight and astonishment. The 11th of February 1780, Mr. Burke presented his plan, comprehending two objects, the reduction of expence, and the better security of the independence of parliament. His introduction stated the difficulties which he must encounter in conducting a plan of reform lessening private emolument; by which it was proposed to sacrifice individual gain from donative, to general good in the retrenchment of unnecessary cost.

Celebrated bill of reform.

In

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In such a case, private feeling was to be overborne by legislative reason; a man of long-sighted and strong-nerved humanity would consider, not so much from whom he took a superfluous enjoyment, as for whom he might preserve the absolute necessaries of life. He laid down the following general principles, as the basis on which he was determined to raise his superstructure of reform: that all establishments, which furnish more matter of expence, more temptation to oppression, or more means and instruments of corrupt influence, than advantage to justice or political administration, ought to be abolished: these rules he applied to certain institutions, public estates, offices, and modes of disbursement, and proved, by accurate documents and conclusive arguments, that the inferior jurisdictions answered no purpose which might not be better effected by the supreme character of the sovereign. He proposed, therefore, that the principality of Wales, the county palatine of Chester, the duchy and county palatine of Lancaster, and the duchy of Cornwall, should be united to the crown; and that offices now annexed to these separate jurisdictions, being sources of useless expence, and means of corrupt influence, should be abolished. His chief attention was bestowed on the household: he proposed to abolish the offices of treasurer, comptroller, cofferer, and master of the household; the wardrobe and jewel-offices, the board of works, and a great part of the civil branch of the board of ordnance; subordinate treasuries, the pay offices of the army and navy, and the office of the pay-master of the pensions. These payments, he designed in future to be made by the exchequer, and the great patent officers of the exchequer, reduced to fixed salaries, as the present lives and the reversions should successively fall. A great number of inferior places, too inconsiderable for historical particularization,

were

were also to be abolished by the plan of Mr. Burke. He proposed to suppress the new office of third secretary of state, as totally unnecessary; also to limit pensions to sixty thousand pounds a year, but without interfering with present holders; and concluded his plan of reduction, by recommending the entire annihilation of the board of trade, as an office totally useless, answering none of its avowed purposes, merely providing eight members for parliament, and thereby retaining their services. To his scheme of reform, he subjoined a system of arrangement, which he conceived would effectually prevent all future prodigality of the civil list. In order to facilitate this regulation, he proposed to establish a fixed and invariable order in payments, to divide liquidations into nine classes[c], ranked respectively according to the importance and justice of the demand, or to the inability of the persons entitled to enforce their pretensions. Such are the outlines of Mr. Burke's scheme for economical reform, wherein an impartial examiner must admit the justness and comprehensiveness of the general principles of political economy, also the accuracy of his details of office, and acknowledge that considerable saving would accrue to the nation from the adoption of the plan. The utility of economy, however, would have been much greater to infinitely more momentous departments of public expence, than any within the civil list — to the ordnance, the navy, and the army. It is probable, that if Mr. Burke had succeeded in his first project of reform, he afterwards would have carried his efforts to the largest sources of expence: all parties

[c] 1st, the judges; 2dly, ambassadors; 3dly, tradesmen to the crown; 4thly, domestic servants, and all persons with salaries not above two hundred a year; 5thly, pensioners from the privy purse; 6thly, holders of salaries above two hundred a year; 7thly, the whole pension list; 8thly, holders of offices of honour about the king; 9thly, the lords of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer.

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joined in bestowing the highest applause on the depth of his financial philosophy, and the profound research and acute discrimination which appeared in every part of his scheme; but, when the principles came to be applied to the particular plans of reform, ministers did not accede. Burke grounded upon his system five bills, which, after much discussion, were at length severally rejected.

While Mr. Burke was engaged in recommending public economy, Mr. Dunning was actively employed in attempting to remedy an evil which he deduced from public profusion. Petitions, both numerous and strong, were presented, deprecating the prevalent abuses, and especially the waste of public money. The principle[a] of the several applications was the same; that the national revenue ought to be solely employed for promoting the national benefit; that every shilling which was otherwise expended, was injustice to the people; and that a great portion of the prodigality was occupied in extending the authority of the crown and propping the power of ministers, which they never could support by wisdom and virtue. On the 6th of April the petitions were discussed, and a memorable debate ensued, in which Mr. Dunning took the lead in favour of the applicants: he exhibited, in a connected series, the history and philosophy of constitutional law; the measures and causes which endangered our rights and liberties in former times; presented a glowing picture of the conduct of ministers; and endeavoured to prove that it had a similar tendency to the counsels which had produced so much mischief under the house of Stuart. From a very extensive, accurate, and interesting detail, in a series of acute and powerful reasoning, he drew the following conclusion: "that the influence of the crown has increased, is increas-

Motion respecting the increasing influence of the crown.

[a] See petitions for York, London, Westminster, and other places, in spring 1780.

ing,

ing, and ought to be diminished;" and proposed this allegation as a resolution to be voted by the house. Such a proposition summoned the chief ability and eloquence of the house in efforts of either attack or defence. So strongly did Dunning and his co-adjutors impress many of the country gentlemen, that they joined opposition; and to the consternation of ministers, and the surprise of their opponents, the motion was successful. Lord North in a few days recovered his wonted majority; but opposition, elated with their late success, and the circumstances from which it proceeded, trusting they would be ultimately victorious, redoubled their exertions. The petitions were the subject of repeated controversies; in one of which [e], Mr. William Adam, a young member of high promise, exhibited a very masterly view of the dangers which accrue from agitating the multitude to an active interference in the government of the country. This gentleman, son of the eldest of the four celebrated brothers, was a native of Scotland, and educated at Edinburgh, at the time that university, headed by Robertson and supported by Blair and Fergusson, was at the zenith of literary glory. From Fergusson his sound and vigorous understanding imbibed the justest principles of ethics and of politics, and was taught to cherish and respect mingled liberty and order. His friend and relation, Robertson, instructed him, while he valued the rights of the people, to prize also the constitutional prerogatives of the crown. On the basis of philosophy, he raised the superstructure of history and of law; and so founded and prepared, he procured a seat in parliament. Mr. Adam drew a striking picture of the progress from popular agitation to revolution and anarchy in the days of Charles I., and allowed that the opponents of the court began from justifiable

[e] On a motion of Mr. Dunning, April 21th, for an address to his majesty, deprecating the sudden dissolution or prorogation of parliament,

and

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and noble motives; he marked the movements of so formidable an engine as the multitude, and followed its progress, until its rapidity and force, becoming totally ungovernable, crushed the constitution. The genius of Mr. Fox gave a different interpretation to the same period of history, and ascribed the fate of Charles, and the calamities of his country, to the weak obstinacy of the king, who, by refusing, in the early part of his reign, to gratify the reasonable wishes of his people, provoked them to a resistance, which brought destruction on himself. The efforts of opposition, great as they were, did not, in the present session, recover the majority of the 6th of April.

A BILL was proposed for excluding contractors from parliament, and by ministers suffered to pass the house of commons with little opposition, probably from either a foreknowledge or predestination of its rejection by the other house. On the general ground of diminishing the influence of the crown, a bill was introduced for preventing revenue-officers from voting at elections, but rejected by a small majority. On the 23d of March, Lord North informed the commons, that the East India company not having made such proposals for the renewal of their charter as he deemed satisfactory, he should move the house for the speaker to give them the three years notice ordained by act of parliament, previous to the dissolution of their monopoly; that the capital stock or debt of £4,200,000 which the public owed to the company, should be fully paid on the 25th of April 1783, agreeably to the power of redemption included in the same act. Mr. Fox inveighed against this measure of the minister, as tending to deprive us of our India possessions, as he had lost us America. Lord North answered, that he intended nothing more than to prefer a legal claim, in behalf of the public, to the reversion of an undoubted right. The proposed notice did not preclude

clude any propositions which might hereafter be made by the company, and did not restrain parliament from accepting any offers which it approved; it merely intended to prevent a year of the public right to the reversion of the company's trade from slipping away without compensation. The company, as it was now established, was certainly the best medium for drawing home the revenues from the Indies; but if they were either so unreasonable or imprudent as not to offer a fair bargain to the public, a new corporation might be formed, and effectual measures adopted to prevent or remedy the threatened evils. These representations of lord North were so reasonable, that his adversaries suffered him to carry his motion without a division.

On the 5th of May, general Conway proposed a plan of conciliation with America, by removing all their just complaints, without acknowledging their independence. It was opposed by ministers, as degrading and ineffectual; and was faintly supported by the chief men of opposition, who thought it totally inadequate to its object. Repeated motions were made in both houses, for inquiring into the army extraordinaries and different articles of public expenditure; but they were all negatived. Propositions were also offered for the removal of ministers, but met with the same fate. Associations continued to be formed both in London and other parts of England, the object of which was reform of abuses, with a change of measures and of men.

Increasing spirit of association.

While so many, both within and without parliament, displayed enmity to ministers, proceedings took place which damped the spirit of association, suspended all opposition, and produced unanimity in both legislative assemblies, in every enlightened well-wisher to his king and country, to whatever sect or denomination he might belong. Legislature, finding the populace of Scotland so much averse to the relief of the Roman catholics, had

Incident which damped that spirit.

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1780.

Extends from Scotland to England.

Protestant society.

not extended their system of tolerance to that country. The successful resistance of the Scottish zealots encouraged fanatics in England to expect that, by efforts equally vigorous, they might procure the repeal, on this side of the Tweed, of the laws which had been prevented on the other. A protestant society was formed in England, consisting of members of nearly the same rank and character which composed the association of Scotland; persons who, though many of them were well-meaning friends to the protestant religion, were generally uninformed men, and estimated popery by its former, not its modern state; and who were for applying towards papists that intolerant spirit which constituted one of the worst qualities of popery during the ages of ignorant credulity and clerical usurpation. The members of this protestant club had met, and declaimed, and wrote, and advertised, during the whole winter, but attracted the attention of neither ministers nor opposition. Had these humble associators been left to themselves, their fanaticism might have evaporated in harmless vanity, gratified by the distinction which its lowly votaries acquired from seeing their names in print, as members of committees for watching over the interests of religion; but the interference of a nobleman in their meetings and resolutions, gave a very different determination to their conduct. Lord George Gordon, younger brother of an illustrious family, was a youth of ingenuity and volatile fancy, but little guided by prudence and sound judgment: wild and chimerical in his notions, ungovernable in his passions, and excessive in dissipation, he was peculiarly marked by eccentricity of conduct. To such a character the extravagance of fanatical theology was no less adapted than any other fanciful hypothesis to dazzle his imagination, or impassioned enthusiasm to inflame his heart. He was, besides, fond of distinction;

Lord George Gordon becomes an enthusiast against popery,

tinction; in the house of commons his lively and desultory sarcasms afforded relief to serious debate, but he was by no means qualified for attaining eminence as a British senator. Emulous rather than ambitious, if he acquired notoriety, he little regarded either the means or the objects. In Scotland he had taken an active share in the violence of the former year, and had corresponded with the most noted of the fanatical demagogues. In England he intimated to the protestant club his theological sympathy; and proud of a titled associate, these persons complimented him with an offer of the president's chair. Behold lord George Gordon now the chief bulwark of the protestant faith against the approaches of antichrist! He entered the more eagerly into the views of those reforming saints, because he saw they confined themselves to theological theory, without scrupulously inquiring into moral practice; and that if he displayed an ardent zeal against popery, the president of the protestant association might pursue his former course of life with as little restraint as before his conversion. [f] His dress, however, and outward deportment, were formed entirely on the puritanical model: with the fanatical populace he passed for a primitive saint, and possessed an influence compounded of the effects of his exalted rank, sanctimonious appearance, and anti-popish zeal. These causes combining with the natural and habitual wildness of his irregular mind, produced in the end of May propositions of a most inflammatory nature, which were speedily adopted as resolutions by the society. On Monday the 29th of May, a meeting was held at coachmakers' hall, to consider the mode of pre-

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and president of the protestant society.

[f] Mr. Wilkes, who had often been the companion of lord George's nocturnal adventures, applied to him, after his regeneration, part of a latin epitaph on Fleetwood Shepherd, another very zealous religionist of similar habits and propensities: *Nulla meretrix displicuit, præter Babylonicam — Except the harlot of Babylon, he was a friend to the whole sisterhood.*

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1780.

Petition to parliament for the repeal of the tolerant law.

senting to the house of commons a petition against popery. In a most furious speech, lord George endeavoured to persuade his hearers of the rapid and alarming progress of the Romish doctrines; declared that the only way to obstruct their progress, was by approaching parliament with a firm and resolute tone, and demonstrating to their representatives that they were determined to preserve their religious freedom with their lives. He would himself run all hazards with the people, when their conscience and their country called them forth: he was not a lukewarm man: if they meant to spend their time in mock debate and idle opposition, they must chuse another leader. A speech so perfectly coincident with the passions and prepossessions of its hearers, was received with the loudest applause. The president moved a resolution, that the whole protestant association should, on the following Friday, meet in St. George's Fields, at ten o'clock, and thence proceed to the house of commons. They were to advance in four divisions, the protestants of the city of London occupying the right wing, were to file off to London Bridge, and to march through the city; those of Southwark in the centre, were to take the route of Blackfriars; the left wing belonging to Westminster wheeling to the left, were to cross Westminster Bridge, followed by the presbyterians from Scotland, who were to cover the rear. The friends of the reformed religion were to ascertain their attachment to the faith by blue cockades, bearing the inscription *No popery*. These resolutions and dispositions might have alarmed men, who considered the powerful operation of religious fury, and the dreadful effects which it has so often produced; but ministers appeared to apprehend no danger, and actually, in the intervening days, adopted no measures for preventing tumult.

A mob surrounds parliament.

On Friday the 2d of June, at the hour appointed, about

about fifty thousand persons met in the fields, and thence proceeded in the prescribed order to the house of commons: having arrived at the avenues to both houses of parliament, they insulted many of the members who were proceeding to discharge their senatorial duty. Lord George repeatedly came from the place which he held as a senator, and harangued the populace, exhorting them to persevere in urging their application, so as to threaten the violation of a senator's privilege. Several members expostulated with him on the outrages which his conduct was likely to produce.[g] The petition being presented, was, after very little debate, rejected by a majority of one hundred and ninety-two to six. In the evening a mob burned the Romish chapels belonging to the Sardinian and Bavarian ambassadors. On Saturday, the riots partly subsided. *Sunday*, the zealots again assembled to disturb the tranquillity of their fellow-subjects, to violate law, order, and justice. Directing their outrages against Moorfields, where there were many catholics, they destroyed dwelling-houses and chapels. On Monday, the rioters again assembled, and were joined by a multitude of those profligate and disorderly wretches, whom folly and vice, in the luxuries of a large and opulent city, impel to supply by depredation the want of industry and virtue. Lawless atrocity being now united to religious frenzy, produced more extensive and pernicious operations. They burnt the houses of protestants as well as catholics, and added plunder

Firm and manly conduct of the legislature.

Dreadful riots in London.

[g] Lord George still exhorted the mob to persist, and many feared that the banditti would break into the house; whereupon a gallant veteran, belonging to as noble a family as lord George himself, and a member of parliament, putting his hand upon his sword, said, "Lord George, if one man of your lawless followers enter our house, I shall consider rebellion as begun, and plunge my sword into you as its leader and promoter." This resolute speech restrained the violence of Gordon, and is supposed to have contributed powerfully to save the house from such audacious intrusion *.

* Of this fact I was informed many years ago, by a gentleman who was present; and often have heard it repeated by others. The officer was general James Murray, uncle to the duke of Athol.

to

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to conflagration. A proclamation was issued, offering a reward of 500*l.* for the discovery of the incendiaries, who, the first evening of the tumults, had set fire to the chapels of the ambassadors. Persons charged with this crime were sent to Newgate, escorted by a party of guards; and the soldiers were insulted and abused by the insurgents for performing their duty. On Tuesday, all the troops in town were distributed to assist the civil powers in protecting the lives and properties of their fellow-subjects, against the frantic outrages of temporary insanity, joined to the skilful and dexterous wickedness of habitual depravity. But the precautions of ministers had been neither proportionate to the danger, nor adopted at the season when the first appearance of tumult called for vigilance and vigour. The military force was on that day inadequate to its purposes; robbery and destruction rapidly increased. After burning many private houses, the insurgents proceeded to Newgate, set that building on fire, and by releasing the prisoners, acquired a reinforcement of three hundred ruffians, eager to promote, and ready to execute, their projects of desperate villany. Instigated and assisted by this new band, they directed their attempts against the magistrates who were most active in apprehending felons and repressing crimes, and with peculiar exultation they destroyed the house and effects of sir John Fielding. Resolved to attack justice in every department, they proceeded from her operative instrument to her supreme and wisest interpreter, and most vigilant guardian. Hastening to Bloomsbury-square, they attacked the house of the illustrious Mansfield, plundered and destroyed the valuable furniture, the constituents of accommodation and ornament; pictures, statues, and sculpture, the monuments of the attic elegance and taste which decorated genius and philosophy: but they effected a more momentous and irre-

Numerous conflagrations.

parable

parable mischief; proceeding to the library, they destroyed not only the books, but the manuscripts. The efforts of the highest talents, directed to the most important objects, with complete and comprehensive knowledge of the science of jurisprudence, the laws of this country, the details of cases varying so greatly in the manifold and complicated engagements of social, civil, and commercial life, in a great, powerful, and free people; the judicial and legislative wisdom of sixty years fell a sacrifice to the ruffian violence of an hour. When the yell of savage fury was heard approaching, lord Mansfield and his lady escaped by a postern, sought and found an asylum from royal hospitality.[h] On Wednesday, proceeding to Holborn, they set fire to two houses belonging to Mr. Langdale, an eminent distiller, which contained immense quantities of spirituous liquors; here the conflagration was terrible. Different gangs now undertook and effected the demolition of the several prisons. All trade was at a stand, houses and shops were shut, dread and consternation overspread the whole city. Wednesday evening, when drawing to a close, presented a scene the most tremendous and dismal, apparently portending the speedy downfal of the British metropolis, and the overthrow of the British government. At the same instant were seen, flames ascending and rolling in clouds from the king's bench and fleet prisons, new bridewell, the toll gates on Blackfriars bridge, houses in every quarter of the town, and especially the combustion of distilled spirits in Holborn. The approaching night was expected to bring destruction and desolation, and thirty fires were now seen

Tremendous aspect of the burning metropolis.

Prisons broken open.

[h] They passed the two following days at Buckingham house; where the sage, after so recent a view of the dreadful effects of unrestrained passion and triumphant vice, entertained his queen with reciting, from the instructive inculcations, elegant composition, and impressive eloquence of Blair, the charms of wisdom and the happiness of virtue.

blazing

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blazing at one time in different quarters of the city: men and women were running from place to place, trying to secure their most valued effects, and to deposit in safety their helpless children. Now was heard the fell roar of savage ferocity, now the reports of musquetry, endeavouring by the last resource of necessity, to repress rebellious fury, but hitherto with little effect; and every thing appeared to menace universal anarchy and devastation. Attempts were made on the repositories of national treasure. A banditti of rioters made an effort to break into the pay-office, while the main body directed their attempt against the bank, and a powerful detachment was sent off to co-operate with the incendiaries, by cutting the pipes of the new river. But now the career of infatuation and anarchy was destined to have an end.

The bank threatened.

Attempt to cut the pipes of the New River.

THE ministers were certainly too tardy in collecting the armed force of the country, and thus suffered the insurgents to incur heinous guilt, and perpetrate irremediable and immense mischief. The chief municipal magistrate, overwhelmed with the same terror that had seized the rest of the inhabitants, brought no active or efficient civil force to assist the military. Though ministers were tardy, yet they were at length by necessity roused to vigour and energy. They assembled the militia and regulars in sufficient time to preserve the capital from conflagration, and the kingdom from ruin. Until Wednesday evening the insurgents had been paramount, and the soldiers unable to oppose their outrages; but they were now assembled in such numbers, and inspired with such resolution, as effectually to resist, and afterwards to overpower the depredators and anarchists. The three preceding days and nights had been to the incendiaries seasons of unresisted victory: this was a night of contest. The troops at length prevailed. The numbers killed in this conflict were considerable: many indeed died

Military reinforcements arrive;

and at length prove victorious.

of

of inebriation, especially at the distillery of the unfortunate Mr. Langdale, from whose vessels the liquor ran down the middle of the street, was taken up by pail-fulls, and held to the mouths of the deluded multitude. The soldiers had been so successful during the night, and received such reinforcements, that on Thursday the inhabitants began to recover from their consternation. The riots, however, being by no means quelled, the shops continued universally shut, and no business was transacted but at the bank. During this day, the soldiers were so active, that the insurgents were dispersed, and did not attempt to rally at night; the following day London appeared restored to order and tranquillity, lord George Gordon being apprehended by a warrant from the secretary of state, and committed to the tower. Thus ended the tumult of 1780.

Insurrection crushed, and tranquillity restored.

In retracing this tremendous insurrection, this horrible carnage and devastation, through the several causes, more or less proximate, to the ultimate; from military execution to rebellious outrage; English protestant association, springing from Scottish association; we find that the series originated in the well-meant, but misguided zeal of a few Scottish clergymen, who, contrary to the advice of the ablest and wisest men of their order, agitated the subject in the general assembly, and thereby excited a ferment through the people. So cautiously ought men to investigate and appreciate objects, and to consider consequences before they set in motion such a formidable engine as popular enthusiasm. Issuing from impassioned fanaticism, this insurrection began, most fortunately for the country, without any concerted plan. Had the bank and the public offices been the first objects of tumultuous fury, instead of the houses of individuals, the chapels and the prisons, there can be little doubt that they would have succeeded in their attempt.

To

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1780.

Loud complaints against the lord mayor.

To the lord mayor, government and many others imputed the progress of the riots to such a pitch of atrocity. Very strong and pointed representations from the secretary of state urged him to use every legal exertion. These not having produced the desired effect, were necessarily repeated in the form of remonstrances. It was alleged, on the other hand, in defence of the magistrate, that the provision of military force in the environs of London was so little adequate to the exigency of the case, as to render every effort of civil power unavailing. To this defence it was replied, that the inefficiency of the civil power could not be certainly pronounced, as it was not actually tried; and that since the soldiers by themselves prevented the utter destruction of the capital, until the arrival of sufficient troops from the country, if they had been assisted by the municipal force, they might have much sooner repressed the insurgents, and prevented a great part of the mischief. Neither duty nor policy, it was said, can justify the commander of a considerable force, in the moment of threatened ruin to his country, to withhold his efforts, on a supposition that they may not ultimately prevail. Both wisdom and patriotism dictate resistance, as the only means of success against the invaders of our law, liberty, and property.

THE effects produced by the riots on the public mind, are not undeserving of historical notice. Before this period, an English mob was generally considered as a test of the public opinion, an effusion of popular energy; military interference was reckoned dangerous, if not altogether unconstitutional. This seemed to be the opinion of the duke of Newcastle, when he kept a mob in pay, ready trained and disciplined, to support the recent accession of the house of Hanover, and to suppress tory tumults; a mode of conduct which had a more successful, or at least a more popular effect, than

recourse

recourse to military force. But this conduct of the mob of 1780, destroyed the credit and consequence of such a body; and the disturbance has been, upon the whole, deemed fortunate for the internal peace of the country, as it has taught government to oppose the smallest beginnings of riot or popular commotion.

On the 6th day of June, during the insurrection, above two hundred members of the house of commons had the courage to attend their duty, in spite of the banditti that occupied every avenue to the senate. They forced their way through the mob, and having taken their places in the house, unanimously passed spirited resolutions, becoming the dignity of legislators who disdained to succumb to lawless outrage. The first was an assertion of their own privileges; the second, a motion for a committee to inquire into the late and present outrages, and for the discovery of their authors, promoters, and abettors; the third, for a prosecution by the attorney-general; and the fourth, an address to his majesty, for the reimbursement of the foreign ministers, to the amount of the damages which they had sustained by the rioters. They afterwards met on the 8th, but judged it expedient to adjourn to the 19th, that order might be completely restored; and the house of lords adjourned to the same day. At their next meeting, his majesty was pleased to come to parliament, in order to exhibit to the legislature a general view of the measures which had been employed during the recent suspension of regular government. "The outrages," said the king, "committed by the hands of desperate and abandoned men in various parts of this metropolis, having broke forth with violence into acts of felony and treason, had so far overborne all civil authority, and threatened so directly the immediate subversion of all legal power, the destruction of all property, and the confusion of every

Parliament resumes its functions.

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1780.

every order in the state, that I found myself obliged, by every tie of duty and affection to my people, to suppress in every part those rebellious insurrections, and to provide for the public safety by the most effectual and immediate application of the force entrusted to me by parliament. Though I trust it is not necessary, yet I think it right at this time to renew to you my solemn assurances, that I have no other object but to make the laws of the realm, and the principles of our excellent constitution in church and state, the rule and measure of my conduct; and I shall ever consider it as the first duty of my station, and the chief glory of my reign, to maintain and preserve the established religion of my kingdoms, and, as far as in me lies, to secure and perpetuate the rights and liberties of my people." All parties agreed in applauding their sovereign's speech, and in voting a loyal address; though some members censured the tardiness with which ministers had prepared for the defence of the metropolis. The following day, a committee of the whole house considered the several petitions, praying for a repeal of the late bill, which had been made the occasion of so much mischief. No repeal was proposed upon those petitions; no evil had actually happened from the relaxation of the single penal law which had been mitigated, and the consequences apprehended from it were considered as improbable and visionary. The protestant association still continuing to urge parliament to attend to their application, a bill was brought in by way of compromise, to prevent Roman catholics from teaching protestants; a measure which was supposed to be both conciliatory and innoxious, as very few of that religion were teachers. The bill having passed the commons, was carried to the house of lords; several peers, considering it a great indignity to parliament, and to that house particularly, to pass a bill which

carried

carried all the appearance of being forced upon them by outrage and threat, opposed its enactment. At length, others being impressed with the same idea, it was set aside by the usual expedient of fixing its farther consideration on a day after the time when they knew parliament was to be prorogued. CHAP. XXIV. 1780.

THE supplies for the service of the year 1780 amounted to 21,196,496*l.* The number of seamen employed was eighty-five thousand, including marines, and thirty-five thousand British troops, including invalids, besides the forces abroad. No more than a million and a half of the navy debt was discharged. The extraordinary expences of the army amounted to 2,418,805*l.* The new taxes, which had been levied the two preceding years to pay the interest upon the money borrowed, were found to be very inadequate to their object; recourse was therefore had to the sinking fund to make good this failure. To provide for these expences, in addition to the usual resources of land and malt, exchequer bills were renewed to the same amount as the former year. The sinking fund was to provide two millions and a half, twelve millions were borrowed upon annuities, and 480,000*l.* raised by a lottery. The annuity bore four *per cent.* interest, and a farther annuity of 1*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.* for every 100*l.* for the term of eight years, the subscribers to be entitled to four lottery tickets for every thousand pounds subscribed, on payment of ten pounds for each ticket. The additional duties were, on malt, low wines, spirits, brandy, and rum, wines of Portugal and France, and legacies; on tea, coffee, and chocolate; and on advertisements in newspapers. All these taxes were levied from luxuries, or benefits enjoyed by the persons taxed: but duties on coals and on salt enhanced the price of necessaries, and bore heavy on the poor, whom every wise financier endeavours to Supplies.

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press lightly. A vote of credit also for a million was passed, in addition to these supplies. At the conclusion of the session, his majesty, after having considered in his speech the war supplies and other usual topics, spoke in the following terms, at once generally descriptive of the duties of senators when retired to the sphere of their respective influence, and appropriate to the present time and situation: "My lords and gentlemen, let me earnestly recommend to you to assist me, by your influence and authority in your several counties, as you have by your unanimous support in parliament, in guarding the peace of the kingdom from future disturbances, and watching over the preservation of the public safety. Make my people sensible of the happiness they enjoy, and the distinguished advantages they derive FROM OUR EXCELLENT CONSTITUTION IN CHURCH AND STATE. Warn them of the hazard of innovation, point out to them the fatal consequences of such commotions as have lately been excited, and let it be your care to impress on their minds this important truth —that rebellious insurrections, to resist, or to reform the laws, must end either in the destruction of the persons who make the attempt, or in subversion of our free and happy constitution." Thus ended, on the 8th of July, a very long and important session; and two months after the prorogation, parliament was dissolved.

Session rises.

Parliament is dissolved.

CHAP. XXV.

War with the French in India—siege and capture of Pondicherry—confederacy against the British interest—war with the Mahrattas—is concluded by the treaty at Poonah.—Hyder Ally instigates and forms a combination of native power against British India.—Warren Hastings—lofty genius—grand scheme for dissolving the confederacy—preparations of Hyder Ally to invade the Carnatic.—Europe.—Admiral Rodney—vindicates the naval glory of England by a signal victory over the Spanish Fleet—important effects of this battle—relieves Gibraltar.—Spanish and French Fleets do not attempt a junction.—Capture of the outward-bound merchantmen—admiralty severely blamed.—America.—Expedition against Charlestown by sir Henry Clinton—strength of that place, natural and artificial—siege—reduction—the province of South Carolina yields to the British arms.—Leaving the government of Carolina to Lord Cornwallis, Clinton returns to New York.—Wise administration of his lordship—obliged to take the field against General Gates—battle of Camden—lord Rawdon—victory of the king's troops.—Atchievements of Tarleton.—of major Fergusson—that able and gallant officer surprised and overpowered by numbers—death and character.—Affairs at New York—defection of general Arnold—character, enterprize, and fate of Major André.—West Indies.—Rodney arrives—his skill draws the enemy to battle—established mode of forming the naval line—Rodney adopts a new plan of attack BY BREAKING THE ENEMY'S LINE *—some captains misconceiving his intention, disconcert the execution—the event therefore indecisive—partial conflicts, but the enemy, though much superior in number, will not venture a close fight.—The enemy are disappointed in their chief objects of the campaign* 1780.

CHAP. XXV. 1780.

WHEN Britain and France quarrel, the contests of these two boldest, most enterprizing, and ablest of modern nations, affect the remotest regions

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War with the French in the East Indies.

of the earth. Disputes springing on the neighbouring coasts of the Channel, tinge the distant Ganges with blood; and the pacific feebleness of eastern Asia mourns the warlike energy of western Europe.

THE English East India company, with a perspicacity sharpened by private interest, had early penetrated into the hostile intentions of France, and saw that the semblance of peace could not long be preserved, and that no intermediate state, however coloured or disguised, could be kept long free from all the consequences of war; they were aware that, long before any account of their proceedings in the East could be received in Europe, these consequences would take such effect as to afford a sufficient cover and sanction to their measures. Before the commencement of the former war, the French had clandestinely conveyed so great an army to the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon, as to endanger the destruction of the British interest in India. Such a force might soon again be formed in those islands with equal privacy, and passing to Pondicherry, might enter the company's dominions so suddenly, as irresistibly to secure their possessions. Against so probable a danger, they immediately, on the delivery of the French rescript, resolved on a bold and decisive measure; and numerous as their body was, they conducted their plan with such extraordinary secrecy, that none entertained the smallest idea of the design, until the effect was publicly disclosed by the accounts from India. They proposed to undertake the siege of Pondicherry, the principal possession of the French; and fortunately the instructions were conveyed with unusual dispatch to Madras. Major-general Munro, early in August 1778, advanced at the head of the company's troops to the neighbourhood of Pondicherry. The naval force of England in those seas was commanded by sir Edward Vernon, and consisted of the Rippon of sixty

sixty guns, the Coventry of twenty-eight, the Seahorse of twenty, the Cormorant sloop, and the Valentine East Indiaman. This small force fearlessly adventured to attack this strong city of the French. On the 10th of August they arrived at this station, and discovered a squadron, which was commanded by M. de Tronjolly, consisting of one ship of sixty-four guns, one of thirty-six, one of thirty-two, and two French India ships armed for war. A very hot engagement ensued, and lasted above two hours, when, on the approach of night, the French retreated. Vernon expected that the admiral of the enemy, trusting to his superior force, would renew the battle the next morning; a contrary wind, however, and a northern current, drove the British ships from their station in the middle of the night, and they were not able to recover it until the 20th of the month. Having regained sight of Pondicherry, they perceived the French fleet in the road: an immediate engagement was now expected, and nothing was left undone by the commodore, in order to close with the enemy; but the alternate failure and contrary direction of the wind rendered all his efforts ineffectual: he trusted, however, that a battle would certainly take place the following morning. The French commander consulted the preservation of his ships more than the defence of the town, and during the night abandoned Pondicherry; and so expeditious was he in his means of escape, that his squadron were totally out of sight in the morning. The success of Vernon, and the departure of the French fleet, facilitated the operations of the besiegers, and appeared to afford a certain prospect of success. On the 21st of August, the land forces invested the town and fortress, while the fleet blockaded it by sea. Though the fort of Pondicherry was dismantled on its restoration to the French by the peace of Paris, yet fresh works had been since raised; but the chief strength

Siege and capture of Pondicherry.

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consisted in the valour and conduct of its governor, M. de Bellecombe, and the courage of the garrison, who, nearly cut off from every hope of succour, persevered to the last extremity in a determined and gallant defence; they were opposed, however, by equal courage and military ability, with superior numbers. On the 18th of September, the batteries were opened, under the powerful fire of twenty-eight pieces of heavy cannon, and twenty-seven mortars. The artillery of the besiegers soon gained an evident superiority, and they were indefatigable in carrying on their approaches; but the activity and obstinate defence of the garrison rendered caution necessary, and, with violent rains which then frequently fell, could not fail of considerably retarding their works. Notwithstanding these impediments, the siege was so far advanced by the middle of October, as to render a general assault practicable; and on the 17th, every thing was ready for beginning the attack. Aware of the hopelessness of longer defence against such force, and of the ruin in which an obstinate and unfounded perseverance would involve his garrison and the inhabitants, the French commander proposed a capitulation, which was willingly accepted by the English leaders. The victorious warriors, with the generosity of British conquerors, bore the most ample and honourable testimony to the gallantry of their enemy, and liberally agreed to every requisition that did not interfere with the public benefit or security. The garrison were allowed all the honours of war; and, as a particular mark of attention to M. de Bellecombe, the regiment of Pondicherry was, at his request, allowed to keep their colours. A numerous artillery became a prize to the victors; all public property underwent the same fate, but whatever was private was preserved to the owners. The company's troops employed in this siege consisted of ten thousand five hundred men, of whom

fifteen

fifteen hundred were Europeans; the garrison of near three thousand, of whom nine hundred were Europeans. The loss of the British amounted to two hundred and twenty-four slain, and six hundred and ninety-three wounded; and of the garrison to two hundred killed. Mr. Law, who had seen and undergone so many changes of fortune in India, was included in this capitulation, and again beheld the power of his country annihilated in that quarter of the globe. Thus commenced our efforts in British India, in the war against the French.

Confederacy against the British interest.

WHILE our enemy was defeated on the coast of Coromandel, an extensive and powerful confederacy was formed with our European antagonists by the native powers of Hindostan. From the decline of the Mogul empire, the principal state of India within the Ganges, in population, valour, and resources, was the Mahrattas empire, the original inhabitants of the mountains: hardened by their situation, and secured by their fastnesses and defiles, this warlike nation had continued unsubdued by the successive conquerors of lowland India, and never submitted to a Mahommedan yoke. Deriving a precarious subsistence from pasturage and hunting, these highlanders were accustomed to supply their wants by depredations on the agricultural and fertile country, and hence acquired all the enterprize and activity which result from an incursive and predatory life. Though divided into a variety of tribes, yet deeming themselves sprung from the same origin, they acknowledged one paramount superior to all their separate chieftains, and had established a system of connexion and dependence, not unlike the feudal gradations of Europe. At their head was Ram Rajah, the descendant of a celebrated leader. In India, both Mahommedan and Gentoo, the principal offices of state descend by inheritance, and official influence, combining with hereditary power, frequently

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quently renders ministers very formidable rivals to their sovereigns. A little before this time, Madur Row, the prime minister, held the reins of government, which his father having with his assistance seized, had at his death left undivided to the son. Both the older and younger usurpers had exerted considerable ability, and acquired distinguished popularity. This youth's uncle, Raganaut Row, treacherously procured his assassination, and being obliged to fly his country, found shelter at Bombay. The refuge afforded to the fugitive greatly incensed the Mahrattas against the English. The presidency of Bombay concluded a treaty with Raganaut, by which they engaged to place him in the official situation recently held by his nephew, while he, on his part, stipulated the cession of extensive territory to the company, and the British from this inducement actually commenced a war.

1780.

War with the Mahrattas;

By the treaty of 1769, Hyder Ally had stipulated with the company reciprocal assistance, if either party was attacked: he accordingly engaged in the war against the Mahrattas; but when thus involved, he complained that the presidency of Madras had not furnished him with the promised succours. He indeed was reduced to great danger, from which having extricated himself with distinguished ability, he concluded a peace with the Mahrattas; and was the more dissatisfied with the presidency of Madras, as he imputed the failure of support, not to negligence but to design. He was aware of the extraordinary influence which the Nabob of Arcot possessed in the English council, and not ignorant of the disposition of that prince to embroil him and the company, and therefore began to connect himself with the enemies of Britain. A desultory war was carried on between Bombay and the Mahrattas until October 1774, when three gentlemen arrived in Bengal, who, by the act of 1773, were to be assessors in council to

the

the governor-general: these were, general Clavering, colonel Monson, and Philip Francis esquire; and their first act was to urge the presidency of Calcutta to condemn the Mahratta war. The council complied, and sent an ambassador to negociate a peace: after a variety of discussion, a treaty was concluded at Poonah, on the 13th of March, 1776.

is concluded by the treaty of Poonah.

THE professed objects of the three new counsellors were, peace with the country powers, along with an inviolable observation of the public faith, and a strict attention to justice in all transactions with the natives. The governor at this time was Warren Hastings, a man of lofty genius and acute understanding, of a very comprehensive range, great in his designs, fertile in invention, dexterous in plan, and firm, bold, and rapid in execution. The death of colonel Monson in 1776, and of general Clavering in 1777, left Mr. Francis unsupported in council, and placed Mr. Hastings in a majority. The governor-general had been outvoted in the question respecting the peace of Poonah, which was extremely disagreeable to the presidency of Bombay. That body, knowing the resolution that had taken place in the council at Calcutta, began to hope for a revisal of the treaty, and the acquirement of much more advantageous terms. The governor-general appeared not unwilling to second their wishes; but a variety of complicated considerations produced from Hastings a much grander scheme of policy, and a more extensive system of measures, than the council of Bombay had expected, or even conceived. Hyder Ally, ever since his late peace with the Mahrattas, had sought the closest connexion with that nation, and by his great political abilities, as well as his high personal character, had acquired powerful influence in their counsels. He had also, with singular zeal, assiduity, and success, paid court to the subah of the Decan: after the Mahrattas and Mysore, the chief native powers in

Warren Hastings;

Hyder Ally instigates and forms a combination of native powers against British India.

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in the hither Peninsula, a negociation was also opened between France, and both Mysore and the Mahrattas. Informed of all these circumstances, and from situation and conduct inferring design, Hastings entertained no doubt that a confederacy was projected against British India: though its specific object might not be hitherto defined, nor its extent ascertained, he had most probable grounds for concluding that a hostile combination was formed against those interests, with the advancement of which he principally was intrusted. He conceived it his duty to employ anticipatory measures, and began with a scheme worthy of his towering genius. As the Mahratta nation would be the most formidable member of the hostile league, he conceived the project of wresting the government of that country from the hands that now held it, and bestowing it on a sovereign, dependent on himself. The deposed Ram Rajah being dead without heirs, one of the pretenders to the Mahratta throne was Moodajee Boosla, the rajah of Berar, a considerable principality in the eastern part of the Mahratta empire, and near the British territories. This prince was on amicable terms with the presidency of Calcutta, and at variance with the Nizam and Hyder Ally, its apprehended enemies: he had a great army, unimpaired by war. Raganaut was promised the place of prime minister, when the rajah should be elevated to the throne; and having a considerable number of partisans in his country, was esteemed an important auxiliary. Meanwhile the presidency of Bombay having proposed conditions to the Mahrattas which they would not admit, declared that the treaty of Poonah was violated, and no longer binding on the company. An expedition being undertaken from Bombay, proved unsuccessful by the treachery of Raganaut, and a treaty was concluded at Wargaum, between the presidency of Bombay and the Mahrattas. Meanwhile preparations

Hastings's grand scheme for dissolving the concert.

tions were making for elevating the rajah of Berar to the throne; but at last this prince himself refused to have any concern in the undertaking, and was gained over by Hyder Ally to take a part in the confederacy against the English. In 1779, a formal league was concluded between the four chief native powers against England; and to this the inferior princes soon afterwards acceded. From Delhi to Cape Comorin, from the Indus to the coast of Coromandel, all except Arcot was hostile to the English name. The first object of attack was the Carnatic, which expedition Hyder Ally undertook to conduct; but, as military operations did not begin till the latter end of the year 1780, not to break the unity of that portion of history, I must reserve the narrative of those transactions until I can carry them to a more advanced period.

Preparations of Hyder Ally to invade the Carnatic.

Europe.

THE naval campaign of 1780 opened honourably and advantageously for Britain. Gibraltar having been closely blockaded by the Spaniards, the relief of that important fortress was entrusted to admiral Rodney, an officer highly distinguished for intrepidity, nautical skill, and naval conduct: in his plans and execution he eminently displayed a boldness of adventure, that befitted a leader of Britons, who neither feared the dangers of the sea nor the enemy, and introduced a system of tactics the best suited to the men he had to command. Having sailed at mid-winter, he had been but a short time at sea when he fell in with a considerable convoy, bound from St. Sebastian to Cadiz, consisting of fifteen merchant ships, guarded by a sixty-four gun ship, four frigates, and two sloops: the whole fleet was taken. The ship of war, and some trading vessels laden with bale goods and naval stores, he sent to England; the rest, whose cargoes were flour, he took with him to Gibraltar. Proceeding in his voyage, on the 15th of January, he descried, off Cape St. Vincent, a Spanish squadron of eleven ships

Admiral Rodney

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ships of the line, under the command of don Juan de Langara. The wind blowing towards the shore, the British admiral, on perceiving the enemy, immediately kept to leeward, in order to prevent them from escaping into their ports, favoured by the shortness of the day. The Spaniards in vain endeavoured to avoid a conflict. About four o'clock in the afternoon the English fire commencing with the usual energy and rapidity, was returned with spirit and resolution by the Spaniards. The battle was obstinately fought: the night soon arriving, was dark, tempestuous, and dismal, and its aspect was rendered more terrible to the British fleet, from being involved among the shoals of St. Lucre, in endeavouring to intercept the enemy from attaining the shore: but these difficulties and dangers only stimulated their courage, and invigorated their efforts. The Spanish ship St. Domingo of seventy guns, with six hundred men, blew up, and all on board perished. The English man of war with which she was engaged, narrowly escaped a similar fate. The action and pursuit continued with a constant fire until two o'clock in the morning, when the headmost of the enemy's line struck to the admiral.

Vindicates the naval glory of England by a signal victory over the Spanish fleet.

THE Spanish admiral's ship, the Phœnix of eighty guns, with three of seventy, were taken and carried safely into port; the St. Julian of seventy guns, commanded by the Marquis de Medina, was taken, the officers shifted, and a lieutenant, with seventy British seamen, put on board; but by her running on shore, the victors experienced the caprice of war, by becoming themselves prisoners. Another ship of the same force was afterwards run upon the breakers, and totally lost; two more escaped greatly damaged, and two less injured were sent into Cadiz. Such was the final disposal of the whole Spanish squadron. Notwithstanding the inferiority of the enemy in point of force, yet, as the British admiral had

had to encounter a boisterous ocean, during the storms of mid-winter, and gloomy darkness, with the additional danger of a lee-shore, few actions have required a higher degree of intrepidity, more consummate naval skill, or greater dexterity of seamanship.

THIS was a very important victory; besides the great damage sustained by the enemy, six ships of the line were added to the royal navy of England; and the value of other prizes, in a public view, was greatly enhanced by the nature of their cargoes, the critical season in which they were taken, and the essential service to which they were applied. The victorious admiral proceeded to Gibraltar, furnished the garrison with necessary supplies, sent also stores and provisions to Minorca, and with part of his fleet set sail for the West Indies; the rest returned with the Spanish prizes to England, under admiral Digby, who in his way captured a French ship of sixty-four guns, one of a convoy to a fleet of transports destined for Mauritius. The success of admiral Rodney caused great joy in the nation, for some time disused to tidings of victory: besides the signal advantage obtained, they considered it as the general restoration of naval supremacy; and the discomfiture of the Spanish fleet off St. Vincent's, had a powerful effect on the operations in other scenes of naval hostility.

Important effects of this battle:

relieves Gibraltar.

SIR Charles Hardy having died in May, the command of the Channel fleet was bestowed on admiral Geary, who sailed in the beginning of June. The enemy did not attempt to face our armament, but left their trade exposed to the British cruizers. In the beginning of July, the admiral fell in with a rich fleet of merchantmen from St. Domingo, and took twelve of the number; the rest escaped through a thick fog. After cruizing for several weeks longer, that commander returned into harbour, resigned the command, and was succeeded by

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Capture of the outward bound merchantmen.

by admiral Darby. Meanwhile the British commerce received a severe blow: an outward-bound fleet of merchantmen for the East and West Indies sailed from Portsmouth, under the convoy of captain Moutray of the Ramillies, and three frigates. The Spanish fleet, joined by a squadron of French, was cruizing off the coast of Spain and Portugal, without venturing to the northward of Cape Finisterre. The convoy included, besides the merchantmen, eighteen victuallers, store-ships, and transports, destined for the service of the West Indies. One of these was of particular importance, being laden with tents and camp equipage for the troops that were designed for active service in the Leeward Islands: the five Indiamen likewise, besides arms, ammunition, and a train of artillery, conveyed a large quantity of naval stores for the supply of the British squadron in the east. The convoy took a course much nearer the enemy's coast than was usual, or at least expedient. On the 9th of August, it met with the enemy's fleet, and most of the merchantmen were captured. This loss caused great dejection among commercial men, and increased the dissatisfaction which had before prevailed against ministry. It was alleged by the friends of administration, that the convoy had pursued that track in order to accommodate the merchants and the East India company, who were taking in wines at Madeira: but it was replied, that the accommodation of the merchants was not a sufficient reason for touching at that island, with such danger of interception; that a course so near the enemy's coast was not necessary in order to steer to Madeira; and that if so easterly a track had been unavoidable, the convoy of such an immense property ought, instead of a single man of war and three frigates, to have been the whole Channel fleet. Admiral Darby having been detained by contrary winds at Torbay, put to sea about the middle of September, and

The admiralty is severely blamed.

steered to the coast of Spain. Count de Guichen was ordered with a squadron to reinforce the fleet in the West Indies, but finding his ships in a very indifferent condition, and being informed that the English fleet had sailed, he resolved for safety to join the combined armament off Cadiz. The French fleet, commanded by d'Estaing, being thus reinforced, consisted of thirty-six sail of the line, which undertook to conduct the West India convoy to the ports of France. Don Louis de Cordova, the Spanish admiral, accompanied the French as far as Cape Finisterre. After their separation from the Spaniards, the French fleet descried admiral Darby, on the 7th of November, with twenty-two ships of the line and two ships of fifty guns. D'Estaing, notwithstanding the great superiority of his numbers, being encumbered by the convoy, and aware of the bad condition of his ships, did not chuse to hazard an engagement. Darby, on the other hand, observing the vast superiority of number on the side of the enemy, did not think it expedient to venture a battle. Ministers conceived that in the relative circumstances the most decisive advantages must have ensued, and without imputing any blame to the admiral, expressed their regret that he had not attacked the enemy. Darby, in the end of November, returned into port.

America.

THE campaign both in America and the West-Indies was much more active and important than in Europe. In the former year the arrival of d'Estaing with the French force on the American coast had turned the attention of sir Henry Clinton chiefly to defence; but the defeat and departure of that enemy, with the brilliant atchievements and important successes of British detachments, encouraged him to hope for proportionate advantage from a comprehensive scheme of offensive operations to be carried on by his main army. He accordingly, in the close of 1779, made

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made dispositions for invading South Carolina and besieging Charlestown: with this view, leaving general Knyphausen to command at New York, he, on the 26th of December, sailed from Sandy-hook, escorted by admiral Arbuthnot, and directed his course to Savannah; where, from the stormy season, he did not arrive until the end of January. The ships being considerably damaged, he deferred his expedition for about twelve days, that they might be refitted.

Expedition against Charlestown by sir Henry Clinton.

CHARLESTOWN, the capital of South Carolina, is situated between the rivers Ashley and Cooper to the north and south; with a harbour formed by the conflux of those streams, and an inlet of the sea to the east; communicating to the west with the main land by an isthmus between the two rivers, called Charlestown Neck, by which only the town can be approached by land. To these natural constituents of security, art and skill were not wanting. The fortifications had been considerably strengthened in 1776, to oppose sir Peter Parker; but chiefly on the side next the sea, whence the attacks had been directed. The Americans, being now informed of the movements and force of the British arms, and aware that the town would be attempted on the side of the land, comprehended that quarter in their scheme of defence. They constructed a chain of redoubts, lines, and batteries, extending from Ashley to Cooper river, upon which were mounted upwards of eighty pieces of cannon and mortars. In front of the lines a canal had been dug, which was filled with water, and from the dam at both ends a swamp oozed to each river, forming natural impediments where the artificial terminated. Behind these were two rows of abbattis, some other obstructions, and immediately in front of the works a double picketed ditch. The fortifications on the right and left were not only strong, but advanced so far beyond the range of the intermediate

Strength of that place, natural and artificial.

intermediate lines, as to enfilade the canal almost from one end to the other. In the centre there was a hornwork of masonry, which being closed during the siege, became a citadel. CHAP. XXV. 1780.

Such were the defences of Charlestown, on the only side on which it could be approached by land; and towards the water, numerous batteries covered with artillery forbade the approach of ships. But besides the security which Charlestown derived from its numerous batteries, it was still more effectually protected by the bar or sand-bank at the mouth of the inlet from the sea. This bar, impassable by the larger ships of war, rendered the entry of others difficult and dangerous; and just within it, a five-fathom hole, of a sufficient depth of water, furnished a convenient station for a squadron to command the bar, and farther obstruct the besiegers. This station was occupied by the American commodore Whipple, with a squadron of nine sail under his command, the largest carrying forty-four, and the smallest sixteen guns. After the perils and difficulties of the bar were surmounted, before a fleet could reach Charlestown, Fort Moultrie upon Sullivan's Island was to be passed, the fire from which had, on a former occasion, proved so destructive to a British squadron; and since that period, the works had been considerably strengthened and enlarged. General Lincoln trusting to those defences, and at the same time expecting large reinforcements from the other colonies, shut himself up in Charlestown at the earnest request of the inhabitants; and with the force under his command, amounting to seven thousand men of all denominations under arms, resolved to defend it to the last extremity. On the 11th of February the fleet sailed, and took possession without opposition of the islands of St. John and of James to the southward of Charlestown harbour, while the army advanced across the country to the bank of Ashley river.

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river. Being at great pains to fortify posts, and preserve his communication with the sea, Clinton did not attempt to pass the Ashley until the 29th of March. This operation, in itself very difficult, was effected with expedition and success, through the skill and activity of captain Keith Elphinstone, who conducted the passage of the troops with distinguished address and ability. Having disembarked on the northern shore of Ashley, the army the following day encamped in front of the American line; and on the 1st of April, began to break ground before Charlestown, at the distance of eight hundred yards from the provincial works. Meanwhile the British fleet approached the bar, in order to second the operations of the army. For this purpose admiral Arbuthnot shifted his flag from the Europa of the line, to the Roebuck of forty-four guns, which, with the Renown and Ramillies, were lightened of their guns, provisions, and water; the lighter frigates being capable of passing the bar without such preparation. Yet so difficult was the task in any state, that they lay in that situation, exposed on an open coast in the winter season to the danger of the seas and to the insults of the enemy, for above a fortnight before a proper opportunity offered: the bar was, however, passed on the 20th of March, without loss.

Siege of Charlestown.

THE American commodore retired to Charlestown; the British ships embraced the first opportunity for passing Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, and notwithstanding a severe and impetuous fire, made good the way. Still the Americans had preserved the command of the Cooper river. General Clinton having now ascertained the co-operation of the fleet, and completed his first parallel, before he opened his batteries sent a summons to the American general to surrender. Lincoln, trusting to the strength of the place, and to the supplies and reinforcements which he might still receive by the

Cooper, refused to yield; and to render the entrance of that river impracticable, ordered a chain of vessels to be sunk across its mouth. On the 9th of April, the British batteries opened, with visible effect. Meanwhile a force was detached under lord Cornwallis, in order to possess the other side of the Cooper river; and his lordship, assisted by the enterprising activity of colonels Webster and Tarleton, and major Fergusson, soon cut off all communication between the garrison of Charlestown and any part of the country. Completely invested, the Americans offered conditions of capitulation; which being much too favourable for the present state, were instantly rejected by the British commander. Major Moncrieff, who had gained so much honour in the defence of Savannah, acquired no less applause from the very superior and masterly manner in which he conducted the offensive operations of the siege. The second parallel was completed on the 19th of April, and the third on the 6th of May. The last of these had been pushed so near to the provincial works, as to be close to the canal; and the canal, for a considerable part of its extent, was quickly drained of its water. On the same day, colonel Tarleton attacked and defeated another body of cavalry, which the enemy had with infinite difficulty collected together. The admiral, who had constantly pressed and annoyed the enemy, received information which induced him to attack Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island; he therefore dispatched captain Hudson of the navy, with two hundred seamen and marines, to attack the fort by land, while he with the ships should batter it by water; but before the battery was opened, the garrison surrendered. After this advantage, general Clinton, wishing to preserve Charlestown from the dreadful effects of a capture by storm, again urged the American general by capitulation to avert destruction; but the provincials, not being

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sufficiently humbled by their misfortunes, still refused to comply. The hostilities were recommenced: the batteries on the third parallel were then opened, and so great a superiority of fire obtained, that the besiegers were enabled to gain the counterscarps of the outwork which flanked the canal: this they likewise passed, and then pushed on their works directly towards the ditch. General Lincoln and the inhabitants, seeing that farther resistance would be ineffectual, offered to surrender. The British commanders were not disposed to press to unconditional submission, an enemy whom they wished to conciliate by clemency; they therefore granted now the same conditions which they had before offered, and the capitulation was accordingly signed. The garrison was allowed some of the honours of war, but neither to uncase their colours, nor beat a British march on their drums. The continental troops and seamen were to keep their baggage, and remain prisoners of war until they were exchanged. The militia were permitted to return to their respective houses, as prisoners on parole; and while they adhered to their engagement, were not to be molested by the British troops: and the citizens were allowed the same terms as the militia. The loss of the royalists at the siege of Charlestown amounted to seventy-six killed, and one hundred and eighty-nine wounded. Of the garrison, the number of the killed and wounded was smaller. The prisoners were, the deputy-governor and the council of the province, seven general officers, a commodore, ten continental regiments, but much reduced, three battalions of artillery, with town and country militia, amounting to more than five thousand men; to whom must be added about one thousand American and French seamen, and near four hundred pieces of ordnance, with a considerable quantity of stores. The commander in chief bestowed the highest encomiums on the officers

Charlestown is reduced.

officers and privates in the various departments of service. The officers most particularly specified were, earl Cornwallis, major-generals Leslie, Hayne, and Kospotch, and brigadier-general Patterson; lieutenant-colonels Webster and Tarleton; major Fergusson, and major Moncrieff of the engineers, in the land-service; and captain Keith Elphinstone in the navy.

The province of South Carolina yields to the British arms.

In the sanguine hopes that spring from unusual success, sir Henry Clinton considered the reduction of Charlestown as the completion of the conquest of South Carolina, and a prelude to the speedy recovery of the southern colonies. He expected, indeed, that the provincials themselves would now effectually co-operate in the re-establishment of their former connexion with the mother-country. Great numbers flocked to Charlestown from all parts of Carolina, to pay their court to the conquerors, and offer their services in support of his majesty's government. The general, with exulting joy, transmitted to the American minister these professions, and attributed to the affection of loyalty, what penetration might have discovered, and experience soon ascertained to be, in most instances, the dissimulation of policy, or the extorted homage of fear. Confident that his projects could be accomplished by a part of his army, he left a division for that purpose under lord Cornwallis, and returned with the rest to New York. Before Clinton's departure, Cornwallis had been employed to drive out of the province a body of continental troops under colonel Burford, who arriving too late to throw succours into Charlestown, had posted himself on the northern banks of the Santee. Here being joined by those of the American cavalry who had survived their last defeat by Tarleton, he made a show of opposition to the British interest, and endeavoured to keep alive the expiring hopes of the provincials. On the 18th of May earl Cornwallis

Leaving the government of Carolina to lord Cornwallis, Clinton returns to New York.

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began the pursuit, and on the 1st of June he overtook the enemy, and gained a complete victory. Of the Americans one hundred and thirteen were killed, and two hundred and three taken prisoners, of whom one hundred and fifty were wounded: Burford made his escape on horseback.

Wise administration of his lordship.

THE American force being entirely driven from South Carolina, his lordship directed his attention to the internal administration of the province; while he was also making dispositions for marching into North Carolina, as soon as the heat should be abated, and the harvest being finished, should enable him to form magazines for subsisting his troops. He established a board of police for the administration of justice, until the state of the province should admit of the regular re-establishment of its former civil government. He made commercial arrangements for permitting the inhabitants to export the produce of their country, enrolled the militia for assisting in defending the colony, and brought the country to a state of tranquillity and order; but these pleasing appearances had no long duration. Of the persons attached to the American cause, who since the capture of Charlestown had submitted to the British government, either by taking the oath of allegiance, or obtaining a parole, some were influenced by the ruinous appearance of American affairs, the despair of ultimate success, and a wish to save the remains of their property that had escaped the ravages and devastations of war; and others were determined by the fear of punishment. The congress and Washington, well acquainted with the fallacy of the loyal professions, and with the real dispositions of a great majority in South Carolina, resolved to send a detachment of the grand army to their assistance. The exertions of Virginia and North Carolina greatly increased the destined force; and

general

general Gates with a considerable army advanced to the southern provinces. CHAP. XXV.

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He is obliged to take the field against general Gates.

INFORMED that the American general was marching towards Camden, lord Cornwallis was compelled to leave the civil arrangements, in which he had been so meritoriously and beneficially engaged, and to resume military operations. On the 10th of August he set out, with fifteen hundred regular troops and five hundred militia; on his march he was informed that Gates with near six thousand men had already entered the province. On the 15th, the armies came in sight of each other at Camden: both generals ordered their troops to halt and form; but it being very late in the evening, they did not engage till the next morning. Lord Cornwallis was posted on ground particularly advantageous to inferior numbers; a swamp on each side secured his army from being flanked, and narrowed the ground in front, so as to render the whole multitude of the enemy unable to act. At the dawn of the 16th, he made his last disposition for battle. His front line was drawn up in two divisions, of which the right was commanded by colonel Webster, and the left was headed by lord Rawdon.[1] A second line was formed for a reserve, and in the rear the cavalry were disposed, being, ready either to charge or pursue, as circumstances might require. The artillery was divided between the two lines, to second and support their respective efforts: the Americans formed their troops also into two lines. The opposite armies being thus marshalled, colonel Webster and lord Rawdon began the charge with such impetuosity as quickly to throw

Battle of Camden.

[1] This young nobleman, the eldest son of the earl of Moira, who possessed the advantages of high birth and ample fortune, accomplishments to grace the court, abilities to inform the cabinet, to convince and delight the senate, with taste and learning to charm and instruct the polished and literary circles of the metropolis, or to enjoy the calm recesses of rural life; when his country's cause was at stake, sacrificed ease, however elegant, refined, or rationally employed, to the generous love of glory, and the imperious duties of patriotism: combined genius and heroism soon raised him to high command.

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Victory of the British troops.

the provincial line into confusion; rallying, however, they made a very gallant resistance, and the second British line advancing, the enemy were entirely broken, and the cavalry completed their route.

THE judgment of the general in planning, his promptitude in executing, and his coolness and self-possession during the whole of the engagement, were the themes of universal admiration and applause. The victory was decisive; the broken and scattered enemy were pursued as far as Hanging-rock, about twenty miles from the field of battle; all their artillery, amounting to seven or eight brass field-pieces, with two thousand stand of arms, and their military waggons, were taken; about nine hundred were killed, and a thousand captured; the general baron de Kall, second in command, was mortally wounded and made prisoner. Lord Cornwallis had no sooner overthrown the enemy, than he prepared to render his success as beneficial as possible to the cause. Sumpter, an American general, had annoyed the royalists, by cutting off or capturing detached parties, and intercepting convoys. The British commander, with great prudence, resolved, before he pursued his victory by marching into North Carolina, to rid the southern province of this troublesome enemy; he accordingly, on the very evening of the battle of Camden, gave directions to that gallant and enterprizing officer colonel Tarleton, to attempt the interception of Sumpter. The American commander, as soon as he heard of the fate of his countrymen, retreated with great dispatch, and having proceeded so far as to apprehend no danger of being overtaken, he halted to refresh his fatigued troops. Tarleton having received his general's orders, executed them with the utmost quickness: on the 10th of August he came up with the Americans, and before they had time to assemble, entered their camp, and cut them off from their arms and artillery. Being thus surprised,

Atchievements of Colonel Tarleton.

prised, the provincials were all killed, taken, or dispersed, and the whole of their stores, ammunition, baggage, artillery, and one thousand stand of arms, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

The discomfiture of general Gates's army, and the defeat and dispersion of Sumpter's corps so soon after, crushed the provincial force in the south: lord Cornwallis now waited only for supplies from Charlestown, before he proceeded to North Carolina. Until provisions for the army arrived, he resumed the consideration of civil affairs. Finding that many of the Americans, after swearing allegiance to the British government, on the approach of Gates, had revolted, he thought it prudent and necessary to restrain perfidy, and prevent future defection, by wholesome severity towards the most active and forward in treachery and violation of their oaths. The estates of all who, after having professed obedience to Great Britain, had joined the enemy, were sequestered; but in this confiscation, separating their innocent families from the traitorous delinquents, he allowed from the property a liberal proportion for the maintenance of their wives and children. Instant death was denounced against those who, after having taken protections from the British government, should be found in arms for the Americans. On the 8th of September, his lordship marched towards North Carolina, and as he passed through the most populous and hostile parts of the province, he sent colonel Tarleton and major Fergusson to scour the country to his right and left. Having arrived at Charlotteburgh, and judging that place from its intermediate position between Camden and Salisbury, a favourable situation for farther advances, he prepared to establish a post.

While he was making the proper dispositions for this purpose, the commanders of his detachments were proceeding in their respective expeditions. Of these the most signal in its efforts, though fatal in its

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Account of major Fergusson.

its event, was the last enterprise of the gallant and meritorious Fergusson. This gentleman had already displayed that combination of intrepid heroism, inventive genius, and sound judgment, which constitute the valiant soldier and the able commander. The son of an eminent Scottish judge [k], and nephew of a nobleman [l] of great literary talents, he sought fame by a different direction of equally vigorous and brilliant powers. In early youth he entered the army, and while a subaltern of eighteen, in the German war was distinguished by a courage as cool as it was determined, his principal object being to become beneficial by professional skill and effort. The interval of peace he employed, by improving himself in military knowledge and science. When the disputes between Britain and her colonies was verging to a civil war, the boasted skill of the Americans in the use of the rifle was exhibited as an object of terror to the British troops. These rumours operated on the genius of Fergusson, and his invention produced a new species of the rifle, which he could load at the breech without using the rammer, or turning the muzzle away from the enemy, and with such quickness of repetition as to fire seven times in a minute. The riflemen might meanwhile be prostrate on the ground, and protected from the shot of the enemy by the smallest eminence, either natural or artificial. Fergusson displayed his contrivance to the satisfaction of lord Townshend, master of the ordnance, and other military men. When the war commenced, his regiment not being ordered for warlike service, he was extremely anxious to be actively employed for his king and country. He was accordingly introduced to the commander in chief, and appointed to command a corps drafted from regular

[k] James Fergusson of Pitfour, lord of session and justiciary.

[l] Patrick Murray, lord Elibank, deemed by Robertson, Fergusson, Hume, and cotemporary sages, in genius and erudition equal to the authors of the Scottish Augustan age.

regiments,

regiments, and to discipline them for the practice of his new invention. At the battle of Brandywine he presented the first specimen of the use of his riflemen [m], and obtained great praise for his skill and successful efforts. In the following year, he was employed in several of the detached expeditions, which unimportant as they proved in result, yet as we have seen called forth a great degree of British valour and ability; and particularly distinguished himself in the incursive war on the North River, in 1779. Fergusson being engaged in the expedition to Charlestown, was of very signal importance to the besieging army, and is mentioned with great praises by sir Henry Clinton.[n] After the reduction of that place, when Cornwallis was attempting by justice and mildness to restore harmony between the province and the mother-country, he called for the assistance of Fergusson. To the valour, enterprize, and invention which were so important in war, Fergusson was known to add the benignant dispositions and conciliating manners which generate good-will and cement friendship in situations of peace. Among the propositions of Cornwallis for the security and tranquillity of the recovered colony, one scheme was to arm the well-affected for their own defence. Fergusson, now a lieutenant-colonel in America, was entrusted with the charge of marshalling the militia throughout a wide extent of country. Under his direction and conduct, a militia at once numerous and select was enrolled and disciplined. One of the great tests of clearness and vigour of understanding, is ready classification, either of things or men, according to the qualities which they possess and the purposes that they are fitted or intended to answer. Fergusson exercised his genius in devising a summary of the ordinary tactics and manual exercises, for the use of the

m See account of the battle at Brandywine, vol. ii. of this history, chap. xix.

n See this volume, p. 61.

militia:

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militia: he had them divided in every district into two classes; one, of the young men, the single and unmarried, who should be ready to join the king's troops to repel any enemy that infested the province; another, of the aged and heads of families, who should be ready to unite in defending their own town, ships, habitations, and farms. In this progress among them, he soon gained their confidence, by the attention which he paid to the interests of the well-affected, and even by his humanity to the families of those who were in arms against him. "We came not," he said, "to make war on women and children;" and gave them money to relieve their distresses. The movements of the Americans having compelled Cornwallis to proceed with great caution in his northern expedition, the genius and rapid efforts of Fergusson were required for protecting and facilitating the march of the army, and a plan of collateral operations was devised for that purpose. In the execution of their schemes, he had advanced as far as Ninety-six, about two hundred miles from Charlestown; and with his usual vigour and success was acting against different bodies of the colonists that still disputed the possession of the country, when intelligence arrived from colonel Brown, commander of the king's forces in Upper Georgia, that a corps of rebels under colonel Clarke had made an attempt upon Augusta, and being repulsed, was retreating by the back-settlements of Carolina. To this information colonel Brown added, that he himself meant to hang on the rear of the enemy, and that if Fergusson would cut across his route, he might be intercepted, and his party dispersed. This service seemed to be perfectly consistent with the purpose of his expedition, and did not give time to wait for fresh orders from lord Cornwallis; Fergusson yielded to his usual ardour, and pushed with his detachment, composed of a few regulars and militia, into Tryon country. In the mean

mean time, numerous bodies of back-settlers west of the Allegany mountains were in arms, some of them intending to seize upon the presents intended for the Creek and Cherokee Indians, which they understood were but slightly guarded at Augusta; others had assembled, upon the alarm of enemies likely to visit them from South Carolina. These meeting with colonel Clarke, secured his retreat, and made it expedient for Brown to desist from his pursuit, and return to his station at Augusta; while Fergusson, having no intelligence of Brown's retreat, still continued the march, which was undertaken at his request. As he was continuing his route, a numerous, fierce, and unexpected enemy suddenly sprung up in the woods and wilds. The inhabitants of the Allegany mountains assembled without noise or warning, under the conduct of six or seven of their militia colonels, to the number of sixteen hundred daring, well-mounted, and excellent horsemen. Discovering these enemies as he crossed King's Mountain, Fergusson took the best position for receiving them that the ground would permit. But his men, neither covered by horse nor artillery, and being likewise dismayed and astonished at finding themselves so unexpectedly surrounded and attacked on every side by the cavalry of the mountains, were not capable of withstanding the impetuosity of their charge. Already a hundred and fifty of his soldiers were killed upon the spot, and a greater number was wounded. Still, however, the unconquerable spirit of this gallant officer refused to surrender. He repulsed a succession of attacks from every quarter, until he received a mortal wound. By the fall of major Fergusson, his men were entirely disheartened: animated by his brave example, they had hitherto preserved their courage under all disadvantages. In the resources of his fertile genius they deservedly placed the utmost confidence, and with him perished every hope of success. Under such

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circumstances, the second in command, judging all farther resistance to be vain, offered to surrender, and sued for quarter.

From the ability and exertions of colonel Fergusson, very great advantages had been expected; and had he not been surprised and cut off, there is no doubt that every expectation would have been fully gratified. By his unfortunate fall, and the slaughter, captivity, or dispersion of his whole corps, the plan of the expedition into North Carolina was entirely deranged. The western frontiers of South Carolina were now exposed to the incursions of the mountaineers, and it became necessary for lord Cornwallis to fall back for their protection, and wait for a reinforcement before he could proceed farther upon his expedition. On the 14th of October he began his march to South Carolina: his lordship and his army met with very great difficulties and hardships; their provisions were so nearly exhausted that the soldiers were limited as to quantity, with hardly any means of cooking[o]; the country was overflowed with incessant rains, they had no tents, and could rarely find a dry spot to kindle a fire: but the soldiers bore their hardships without repining, as they knew their officers and generals fared no better than themselves. His lordship himself was taken ill; but nevertheless preserved his vigour of mind, and arrived on the 29th of October with his army at Wymesborough, to wait for fresh reinforcements from sir Henry Clinton. Meanwhile the mountaineers had dispersed, but the north-east part of the province was infested by the depredations of an enterprising partisan of the name of Marion.

Affairs at New York.

In the northern part of America, operations and events were of much less importance, than in the south. The force left for the security of New

[o] Stedman, vol. ii. p. 229.

York,

York, appeared adequate to the defence of that city at the departure of Clinton; but the extraordinary rigour of the winter soon after exposed the British garrison to an unforeseen danger. One of the chief causes of the safety of New York was its insulated situation, which gave full effect to our naval superiority. The uncommon intenseness of the frost during the winter of 1779-80, deprived it of this protection. By the middle of January, the North River was so completely covered with thick ice, that the largest army, with the heaviest artillery and baggage, might have passed on it with ease. In other quarters, towards the country, New York was no less accessible, whilst its communication with the sea was entirely cut off. In this perilous situation, the veteran general Knyphausen took such precautionary measures as prudence dictated; the seamen were landed from the ships and transports, and formed into companies; the inhabitants were embodied, officered, and took their routine of duty with the regular garrison. They were deprived of those supplies which a communication by water would have afforded, and in particular suffered so severely for want of fuel, that it became necessary to break up some old transports, and to pull down some uninhabited wooden houses, to supply their present necessities. Fortunately for the British garrison, Washington's army was in no condition to profit by the accessibility of New York; it had been greatly weakened by detachments that were sent to the relief of Charlestown, was in extreme want of provisions and other necessaries, and from that cause seized with the spirit of discontent almost rising to mutiny. No attempt was made on the British garrison, except to straiten its quarters, and to intercept convoys. In February, major Matthews having defeated a party of Americans posted at King's Bridge to interrupt the communication of the garrison with the country, opened the way for

more

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more liberal supplies. The spring advanced, and thawing the ice, restored New York to its insular situation; and the British commander, exempted from the necessity of attending to defence, made dispositions for offensive measures. Informed of the prevalence of a mutinous spirit in the American army, and imputing to disaffection what really arose from distress, on that supposition hoping for the co-operation of the Americans, he attempted to establish the royal standard in the Jerseys; but he soon found that the American soldiers, though they repined at their difficulties, persevered in their inveteracy; and finding that, opposed by the provincials, his troops could obtain no footing in that country, he recalled them to New York. Such was the state of affairs when general Clinton returned from Charlestown, on the 23d of June. General Washington, expecting the speedy arrival of a French armament, confined his operations to desultory and detached excursions. On the 10th of July, the expected reinforcement reached Rhode Island: it consisted of seven ships of the line, some frigates, and a great number of transports, having on board six thousand troops. The fleet was commanded by de Ternay, and the troops by Rochambeau: in order to prevent discussions of rank in command, and to obviate every difficulty that might arise from the junction of the French troops with the American army, a commission was sent to general Washington, appointing him a lieutenant-general of France, and commander of the forces now sent. So powerful a reinforcement revived the drooping spirits of the Americans, and invigorated their exertions to recruit their own army. The French squadron being superior to that of Arbuthnot, the British commander thought it prudent to act on the defensive; but six ships of the line arriving from England, they prepared for an expedition to Rhode Island, in order

order to act offensively against the French. Meanwhile Washington having his army strongly reinforced, hastened across the North River, and approached King's Bridge. So unexpected a movement obliged sir Henry Clinton to abandon the expedition against Rhode Island, and return with the troops for the protection of New York, leaving admiral Arbuthnot to block up the French fleet at sea. Washington expected the count de Guichen with a fleet of twenty ships of the line from the West Indies, and entertained sanguine hopes that the whole combined force would overpower Clinton and Arbuthnot, and wrest New York from the hands of the British: to concert measures for this design, he left his army, and repaired to the French commanders at Rhode Island. CHAP. XXV. 1780.

Defection of general Arnold.

WHILE Washington was absent for this purpose, a scheme was formed for delivering to sir Henry Clinton the strong post of West Point in the highlands upon the North River, the possession of which would have nearly cut off all communication between the northern and middle colonies. The author of this project was the celebrated general Arnold. This officer, after the campaign in the Jerseys, had been appointed commander of the American garrison that occupied Philadelphia: there he had lived so luxuriously and splendidly, as to disgust the Quakers, who were the principal inhabitants of that city, and to displease the congress, by a conduct so totally inconsistent with the austerity of republicans beset with danger; he lived also so profusely as far to outgo his stated income. To supply his deficiencies he took shares in privateers, and embarked in other speculations; but his various projects proved unsuccessful. He made considerable claims on the public, but when his accounts were examined by commissioners, a great part of his demand was refused. He appealed to the congress, which gave judgment that the inspectors of his claims had allowed

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lowed him too much. Seeing the embarrassment of his affairs, his creditors became extremely importunate. Such a situation galled the proud and irritable temper of Arnold; who, giving vent to his resentment, and recapitulating his services, complained in strong and indignant terms of the ingratitude of congress. Provoked at the freedom and severity of his expostulation, that body appointed a court martial, to examine into his conduct as commander of Philadelphia. He was sentenced to a general reprehension, and also a reprimand from Washington, whom he deemed his personal enemy. From this time Arnold appears to have formed a design of betraying the interests which he professed to support, and joining the British; but to have suspended the execution until an opportunity should offer, of materially injuring the cause which he was about to desert, and serving the power he was about to join. The interval of Washington's absence appeared to him a favourable opportunity for delivering an important post to Clinton. He accordingly opened a correspondence with the British general; and as he required a confidental agent to be sent, major André, aid-du-camp to sir Henry Clinton, and adjutant-general of the British army, undertook to confer with him, and bring the negotiation to a conclusion. This was a gentleman of very great merit, and rising fast to a high character in the army. Though open and honourable, yet sensible that, in war, stratagem is no less necessary than military prowess, he could find nothing in the employment assigned him which was inconsistent with the character of a gallant soldier. Perceiving that very momentous advantage might result to his country from the success of the scheme, he was by loyalty and patriotism stimulated to undertake its execution. Able and ingenious, he was conscious that he was well fitted to promote its success. The Vulture sloop of war had been stationed so near general Arnold's post,

Character, enterprize, and fate of major André.

as to facilitate private communication without exciting suspicion. On the 21st of September, André went on board the sloop, and was at night conveyed in a boat to the beach without the lines, where he met with general Arnold. Day-light approaching before the business was finally adjusted, André was told that it would be necessary to conduct him to a safe place, where he should lie concealed during the day, and return at night on board the sloop. The retreat to which he was brought was, against his intentions and without his knowledge, within the American lines. Here Arnold delivered to him various papers concerning the state of the forces, and other matters, for the information of Clinton, to shew that general the most expeditious and effectual means of getting the American army into his power. The outlines of the project were, that Arnold should make such a disposition of the wing of the army under his command, as would enable sir Henry Clinton completely to surprise their strong posts and batteries, and throw the troops so entirely into his hands, that they must inevitably either lay down their arms, or be cut to pieces. Besides the immediate possession of these strong holds, and the cutting off so great a part of the enemy's best force without loss or difficulty, the consequences would have reached much farther, for the remainder of Washington's army would then have been laid open in such a manner to the joint exertion of the British forces by land and water, that nothing less than slaughter, dispersion, and final ruin, could have been the result. With respect to the Americans, such a stroke, it was conceived, could not have been recovered: independent of the loss of artillery, magazines, and stores, a destruction of their whole disciplined force, and of most if not all of their best officers, must have been immediately fatal. While André was with Arnold, the Vulture had shifted her position, in consequence of an at-

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tack from some artillery on shore, and was gone down nearer to New York; thence it being impracticable for André to return in the same way that he had come, he was obliged to proceed by land. Involved in such circumstances without any fault of his own, necessity compelled him to employ deception for his extrication. Hitherto he had worn his regimentals; now dressing himself in a plain suit, he received a passport, under the name of John Anderson, by which he on horseback passed the outposts. Conceiving himself in perfect safety, he was well advanced on his return, when three militia-men meeting him on the road, suddenly seized the bridle, and interrogated him whence he came. Confused at so unexpected an encounter, he answered *from below*: he immediately recollected his mistake, but too late; the suspicions of his interrogators were roused, and they insisted on searching him. He offered his purse and watch, and promised very high rewards if they would suffer him to depart; but all was unavailing. The generous André, now regardless of his own fate, had no anxiety but to save Arnold from the certain destruction that awaited him when the contents of the papers should be made known to the Americans. This object he effected by a dexterous stratagem: producing his passport from that general, he desired that he might be informed of his seizure, and that he himself should be detained in custody until Arnold's orders were known. The captors complying with this request, a message was sent to Arnold, which, announcing the detention of John Anderson, induced him, as André desired and expected, to seek safety by flight. He escaped, got on board the Vulture, and repaired to New York. André being informed that Arnold was out of reach of the Americans, avowed himself under his proper name and character. Washington having now returned, André wrote to him, detailing the circumstances of the case. Disregarding every danger,

danger, his only concern was to prove that he had conducted himself as became a man of honour, and had no intention to be within the American lines, nor to act as a spy; that he was merely the agent of a negociation, in which neither he nor his employer had practised treachery, or done any thing inconsistent with the laws of war. He had gone upon public business under a flag of truce, dressed in his uniform, to confer with the commander of that post; and had, without his knowledge, been brought within the American lines. His subsequent disguise had been the result of necessity, not of choice. Washington appointed a board of general officers to take cognizance of the case; and before these gentlemen André made an explanation, similar in substance to that which his letter to Washington had contained, but much more copious in detail. His enemies heard with admiration a defence, which with a magnanimous indifference to life admitted the fact, but with a generous regard to reputation vindicated the motives. The American board, however, confining themselves to the literal and simple fact of his being in disguise within the American lines, instead of taking into consideration all the concomitant circumstances, doomed the gallant André to suffer death as a spy. The only evidence of the fact was André's own admission: not only humanity but justice required, that his own evidence, if allowed such weight against him, should also be allowed in his favour; and that his declaration of pure intentions ought to be considered, as well as his acknowledgment of an act contrary to the laws of war. At New York, all ranks, from a centinel to the commander in chief, felt the most poignant concern at the situation of the unfortunate captive, whom they respected and admired as an officer, and loved and esteemed as a man. Sir Henry Clinton employed every effort to save so valuable a life: he opened a correspondence with Washington by

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means of a flag of truce, and urged every motive which justice, policy, and humanity could suggest, to induce a remission of the sentence. Finding his letters ineffectual, he sent out general Robertson with a flag, to confer upon the subject with any officers that should be appointed by general Washington. An interview took place between general Robertson and general Green, who had been president of the court-martial; but all efforts to save the unfortunate André were unavailing. André, finding his doom unavoidable, wrote a most pathetic letter, praying that he might not die the death of a common malefactor, but by a mode more befitting a soldier. Even this small boon was refused to a generous enemy, by the inexorable rigour of stern republicanism. On the 22d of October, the ill-fated hero met his death, with a composure, serenity, and fortitude, worthy of conscious innocence suffering unmerited punishment.

Thus fell the gallant André, losing his life for loyally and patriotically endeavouring to serve his king and country. If criminality is to be estimated by intention, he was put to death without any proofs of guilty design, and with the strongest presumptions of innocence. Such relentless inhuman rigour could answer no purpose of policy, as it certainly neither enhanced the character, nor promoted the interest, of the Americans; it was evidently the effect of revenge, and of revenge foiled in its principal object. André suffered for the defection of Arnold. Had that general been caught, and undergone the punishment due to treachery, the impartial reader would not perhaps have blamed the sentence, and might have considered that as justice to a traitorous friend, which he must reprobate as cruelty to a fair and generous foe.[p]

The death of André, which Washington could

[p] Stedman, vol. ii. p. 252.

have

have easily prevented, will certainly in future ages be regarded as a dark spot in the bright character of the American general. Arnold published a declaration of his motives for leaving the service of America, consisting chiefly of invectives against his late associates, which, whether true or false, had, coming from him, the less weight, that the character of the Americans, now the object of his reprobation, was identically the same as before when the object of his panegyric. Winter now approaching, and the count de Guichen not having arrived from the West Indies, both parties, after concluding an agreement for the exchange of prisoners, retired into quarters. For the prevention of Guichen's arrival in North America, we are to find the causes in the transactions of the West Indies.

West Indies.

Arrival of Rodney.

Sir George Rodney having, as we have seen, left Gibraltar in February, and sailed for the West Indies, had arrived at St. Lucia, and taken the command of the fleet upon the Leeward island station by the latter end of March. Just previous to his arrival, M. de Guichen, with twenty-five ships of the line, and eight frigates; all full of troops, had paraded for several days before that island, with a view either of surprising or of overwhelming the British force by their great superiority. The good disposition of the troops made by general Vaughan, and of the ships by rear-admiral Parker, however, frustrated their design. Sir George Rodney, with twenty ships of the line, and the Centurion of fifty guns, followed the French fleet into Martinique, and offered them battle; but the enemy, notwithstanding the superiority of their numbers, would not venture to engage. To entice the enemy to leave the harbour, the British admiral retired to Gross Islet Bay in St. Lucia, leaving swift sailing frigates to watch their motions, and convey to him intelligence. On the 16th of April, Guichen sailed with his fleet; the following

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following day Rodney came in sight of the enemy late in the evening, and found them disposed to avoid an engagement. He watched them with such vigilance as to prevent their escape. The next morning, the French admiral made very masterly dispositions for avoiding an engagement: this the British commander counteracted with equal nautical skill and professional ability, which at last rendered a battle unavoidable.

His skill draws the enemy to battle.

Established mode of forming the naval line.

In forming the line of battle, the long established mode was, when fleets were nearly equal in number, to oppose ship to ship, by which means superior force and seamanship prevailed, without any extraordinary efforts of naval ability or conduct. Rodney possessed not only that professional experience, guided by which brave men fight in the way in which brave men have fought before, but a comprehensive genius, which could adopt measures to existing cases, and leave precedent when novelty tended more effectually to secure the object. The enemy being considerably superior in number, he proposed not to attack the whole at once, but with all his force to bear down on a part of theirs, so that by mastering one division, he might easily overpower the rest. [9] For that purpose he directed his van to attack the hindmost ships of the enemy's centre, and the remainder of his fleet the rear. He also made a general signal to his ships to lie close to the enemy, and take example by the admiral. His fleet being in the proper position for engaging the enemy, according to the plan which he had arranged, he made the signal for

Rodney adopts a new plan of attack, by breaking the enemy's line.

[9] The examiner of the naval tactics which Rodney introduced, and which he himself in the last war, and others in the present, have practised with such terrible effect and glorious success, will see that it proceeded on the same principle that regulated the military tactics formed and exercised by the illustrious Frederic; and which produced the systems and movements of the Macedonian Philip, and his preceptor Epaminondas. The battle of Leuctra was gained by the masterly skill of the Theban hero directing his whole force on a part of the enemy's, with such disposition and compactness as to BREAK THEIR LINE. See description of the battle of Leuctra, Gillies's History of Greece, vol. iii. p. 368.

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every ship to attack her opposite, in the enemy's line. The commander of his van-most ship, a gentleman thoroughly experienced in the precedented mode of tactics, misconceived the admiral's meaning, and supposed his orders to be to steer towards the van-most ship of the enemy. This misapprehension communicating itself to the succeeding ships, tended to disconcert the masterly design of the admiral. His orders were not fully regarded in another particular: he had given, and had been obliged to repeat his signal, for lying close to the enemy. Several ships of his fleet kept at so great a distance, as not to second and support the admiral. The admiral's own ship, however, and some others, did very great execution; but the deviation from his orders, both as to plan and nearness, prevented a decisive issue to an engagement, for, and in which the commander had used every effort of design and execution which could lead to victory.

Some captains misconceiving his intention, disconcert the execution.

The event is therefore undecisive.

THE French fleet was beaten from the scene of action: Rodney pursued them as soon as the crippled state of the ships that had engaged according to his orders, and the arrival of others in their proper position, permitted. Such dispatch was used to repair the damaged ships, that on the 20th they again descried the enemy, but not in sufficient time to prevent them from taking refuge under Guadaloupe. In the beginning of May, the French fleet again sailed; and on the 10th, it was seen by the British a few leagues to windward. The enemy having the advantage of the wind, were able either to hazard or to avoid an engagement at pleasure, but chose the latter alternative. Rodney endeavoured to gain the lee-gage, but was not able to succeed. By feigning flight, on the 15th, he had almost drawn the enemy to battle; but after a partial cannonade between the extreme ships of the respective fleets, the enemy retired without a general battle. On the 19th, admiral Rodney endeavoured to

Partial conflicts.

The enemy much superior in number, will not venture a close fight.

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to turn the fleet of the enemy; and from his movements both parties became to entangled, as to render a conflict unavoidable between the British van and the enemy's rear. The enemy having suffered considerable loss, bore away to Martinique. Rodney repaired to Carlisle Bay in Barbadoes, to refit his shattered ships. In these conflicts the French evinced themselves considerably improved in naval warfare, and our ships were much damaged in the repeated encounters; but the very object of their improved attack manifested conscious inferiority. Their chief purpose was to aim at our rigging, and thereby avoid CLOSE FIGHT, WHICH UNIFORM EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT EVERY OPPONENT OF THE ENGLISH NAVY TO SHUN, IF THEY WOULD AVOID DESTRUCTION. Spain sent a considerable naval force to join her ally in the West Indies; and thus recruited, the Bourbon fleet amounted to thirty-six ships of the line, a force that apparently must be able to overwhelm the British West Indies; but this ostensible accession of strength proved eventual weakness: the Spanish troops were too much crowded on board their transports: that circumstance, co-operating with the length of the voyage, the change of climate and diet, and above all, their peculiar laziness and want of cleanliness, the whole of those combined causes generated a mortal and contagious distemper, which first infecting their own seamen, at length spread, though not entirely with so fatal an effect, through the French fleet and land forces. The pestilential disease still continuing, prevented the French from profiting by their fleet. The Spanish admiral proceeded to the westward, and, having parted with the French at St. Domingo, went on to the Havannah. Besides the infectious disorder, there appeared to be a want of concert between the armaments of the two allies, which very greatly obstructed their schemes for annoying Britain. Part of the French plan of operations

rations had been, after the expected reduction of the British power in the West Indies by the combined forces, that their fleet should proceed to New York, and in conjunction with the Americans and the French ships and army who were there before, should capture New York, and drive the British from America. But after the first of these vast projects had failed, Guichen considering his former disappointments, the present state of his army, of his ships and men, found the expedition utterly impracticable, and proceeded directly to Europe. Rodney, aware of the original design, and on the departure of Guichen conceiving that he was bound for New York, sailed himself for the same place, where he thought his assistance would be so much wanted; but finding his services not necessary in that quarter, he returned in the close of the year to St. Lucia. Besides the operations between the fleets of the belligerent powers during this campaign, various conflicts took place among single ships, both in Europe and the West Indies, which did signal honour to the courage and skill of both parties, but in the result of every action manifested the superiority of Britain upon her own element.

The enemy disappointed in the chief objects of the campaign.

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Proceedings against the rioters. — Lord Loughborough's charge to the grand jury — difference of opinion on the construction of Edward III.'s treason statute — legal authorities not altogether conformable to statutory definition — literal and free interpreters of statutes — lord Loughborough follows high authorities. — No grounds for the charge of rigorous severity against the rioters. — Political effects of the riots. — General election — contest for Westminster — Mr. Fox is chosen on the 10th of October, which thenceforward is consecrated to anniversary celebration. — Continental affairs — the character of Joseph opens — he aspires at the possession of Bavaria — is supported by Frederic. — Hostilities between Prussia and Austria — are terminated by the peace of Teschen. — Continental powers are jealous of British commercial and naval greatness. — Conduct of Russia — armed neutrality — real objects of. — State and interest of Holland — Holland favours the revolted colonies — remonstrances of Britain. — Discovery of a treaty between the Dutch and the Americans — rupture with Holland — the Dutch are the aggressors. — Meeting of Parliament — choice of a speaker — King's speech. — Mr. Fox's plan of attack against ministers — he begins with charges against lord Sandwich — his motion concerning the appointment of sir Hugh Palliser. — Mr. Burke resumes his plan of economical reform. — Beginnings of lord Chatham's second son, Mr. William Pitt. — The celebrated comic poet, Sheridan, turns his extraordinary talents to politics. — India affairs are extensively considered in parliament — two committees of inquiry are appointed — one has for its chairman Mr. Henry Dundas. — Questions for future deliberation respecting India, proposed by lord North. — Petitions from counties for redress of grievances. — Different opinions of Messrs. Fox and Burke on the marriage law. — Supplies — extravagant terms of the noted loan of twelve millions. — Lord North, incorrupt himself, permits wasteful

wasteful corruption in others — inefficacy, in arduous situations, of talents and benevolent dispositions, without firmness of resolution. — Session rises.

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TWO internal subjects principally attracted the public attention during the recess of 1780; the trial of the rioters, and the general election. Persons accused of tumults committed within the county of Middlesex and the city of London, were arraigned at Hicks's Hall; and bills being found for felony, either in robbery or arson, they were tried at the Old Bailey. The judge had not thought it necessary, in addressing the grand jury, to be peculiarly minute in explaining the law applicable to crimes which came so frequently under their consideration; and though well adapted to his view of the subject, the charge delivered no doctrines that particularly deserve historical record. Eighty-five persons being indicted, forty-three were acquitted, and forty-two capitally convicted; but of the condemned, twelve obtained mercy.[r]

Proceedings against the rioters.

FOR trying persons alleged to have committed outrages in the county of Surry, a special commission was appointed to sit at St. Margaret's Hill in the Borough; and the first nominee was Alexander Wedderburn, who was recently promoted to be lord chief justice of the common pleas, and called to the house of peers by the title of lord Loughborough. The persons here presented were accused of treason, and the judge delivered to the grand jury a charge, which the magnitude of the crime imputed, the doctrines promulgated, the high character of the speaker, and the splendid oratory of this exertion, combined in very strongly impressing on the public attention.

Lord Loughborough's charge to the grand jury.

THE learned reader must know that a very material difference subsists between the law of treason, as it is expressed by the statute of Edward III. on the

Difference of opinion on the construction of Edward III.'s treason statute.

r See Annual Register, 1780; Appendix to Chronicle, p. 271—277.

One

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one hand, and on the other interpreted by lawyers and judges.[a] The two chief species contained in the celebrated law of Edward are, to compass or intend the king's death, or to levy war against his person and government. But lawyers, partly desirous of paying court to the sovereign, and partly convinced that such narrow limitations of legal definition may often screen enormous guilt, had introduced a greater latitude. They observed, that if a man should enter into a conspiracy for rebellion, fix a correspondence with foreign powers for that purpose, or even plot the overthrow of the existing constitution, if he was detected, and no rebellion or insurrection ensued, by the letter of this statute he could not be convicted of treason. To prevent this inconvenience, they had commonly laid their indictment for intending the death of the king, and had produced the intention of rebellion as a proof of the other intention, and thus confounded the two species of treason, which the statute had accurately distinguished[b]; whereas the law had made only one kind of *intentional treason*, a purpose to put the king to death; the lawyers had made two, a design to levy war or rebel. It was frequently alleged, that by such an interpretation, lawyers and judges assuming to themselves a legislative authority, which is not vested in them by the constitution of their country, exercised it in extending penal law, and rendering designs capital that were not legally criminal. The object of this constructive interpretation was no doubt so far laudable; in estimating criminality, they proposed to take into the account moral depravity and political mischief, and to provide against new devices of flagitious ingenuity; but, on the other hand, the admission of such constructions might be abused to the most oppressive and

Legal authorities not altogether conformable to statutory definition.

[a] See Blackstone, vol. iv. p. 74—93.

[b] Most of these observations are either extracted from, or suggested by, Hume's account of the trial of lord Russel.

tyrannical

tyrannical purposes.[u] There were always in Rome[x], and have been and are in England, two classes of interpreters of law, the literal and the free; or, in the language of professional men, the arguers from law and from equity.[y] Persons early instructed in the civil law have more frequently belonged to the latter class than the former. This was the case with lord Loughborough, who has, on all great questions, shewn himself a liberal rather than a literal interpreter. He in this charge proceeded according to the practice of lawyers, and opinions of judges; and on this sanction he supported the constructive doctrine, instead of the precise definition, of legislature. Arguing on the *authority* of Fortescue, sir Matthew Hale, and other luminaries of judicial history, he stated, that every insurrection which, in the judgment of the law, is intended against the person of the king, be it to dethrone[z] or imprison him, or to oblige him to alter his measures of government, or to remove evil counsellors from about him, amounts to levying war within the statute, whether attended with the pomp and circumstances of open war or not; and every conspiracy to levy war for these purposes, though not treason within the clause of levying war, is yet an overt act within the other clause of compassing the king's death. Some lawyers contended, that it was not consistent with legal propriety to rest opinions on the authority of the judges, when they contravened an express statute; and that the substitution of a judge's opinion for the enactment of a legislative assembly, was changing judges into lawgivers.

Literal and free interpreters of statutes.

Lord Loughborough follows high authorities.

[u] The danger of departure from established law, to punish even the most atrocious culprits, is perhaps nowhere more ably exhibited, than in Cæsar's speech on the discovery of Catiline's conspiracy, as presented by Sallust.

[x] See Gibbon's account of the Sabinians and Proculeians, in his view of the Justinian code. Vol. vi.

[y] In the parting view of the illustrious Mansfield, I endeavour to state the separate and comparative advantages and disadvantages of these two modes of interpretation.

[z] See charge, Annual Register, 1780, p. 281.

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THE judge did not escape without censure for the doctrines which his address contained; and persons who hastily examined his conduct, deemed him severe and sanguinary; but for that blame just grounds are not to be found either in his charge or proceedings. Whether it be constitutionally right that treason is to be ascertained by judicial interpretation, it is historically true that such has been the mode usually adopted by the most reputed judges on criminal trials: lord Loughborough therefore merely applied the rules and followed the example of his eminent predecessors. As the insurrection had been very atrocious, severe punishment was a requisite sacrifice to justice, order, and tranquillity; but so far was the judge from the superfluous rigour which was imputed to him, that he recommended to mercy such of the guilty as had extenuating circumstances in their favour. It may be farther observed, that whether the construction of the judge concerning the guilt of a conspiracy to levy war were or were not just, no one was condemned who had not been found guilty of actual insurrection and rebellion against the king and government. His constructive treason therefore produced no effects to the accused, which would not have arisen from the most rigid interpretation. Forty-three were tried, of whom twenty-six were found guilty, and the rest acquitted.[a]

No grounds for the charge of rigorous severity against the rioters.

THE riots, which were thus effectually suppressed, really strengthened administration: the scenes of enormity which were exhibited in the metropolis struck men with horror, and by a natural, though an erroneous effect, inspired a general dread of popular meetings, however legal or peaceable. These dispositions reached to the country meetings, petitions, and associations, and consequently to all applications for redress of grievance, and schemes for a reform in parliament.

Political effects of the riots.

[a] See Annual Register, 1780, p. 285—287.

THE

THE capture of Charlestown, of which the news arrived soon after the riots, tended to erase the memory of past disappointments in the war, and to revive the sanguine hopes of the speedy subjugation of the colonies. The victory of Rodney, which had opened the naval campaign, succeeded by the stationary inaction of the French and Spanish fleets in Europe, joined to the little atchievements of their mighty force in the West Indies, gratified the national pride, and cherished the hopes that the house of Bourbon would severely pay for the temerity of the attempt to wrest from Britain the dominion of the sea. Many who formerly reprobated the war, and condemned the measures and principles in which it originated, forgot their disapprobation when they saw or thought that it was likely to have a prosperous issue; and the influence and authority of the crown were more spread, and better fixed than they had been for several years. In this state of things, and disposition of the people, ministers conceived the season peculiarly favourable to a new election. The parliament had already sitten six years, and if it continued to the seventh, at the expiration of that time circumstances might be by no means so auspicious. Having resolved on the measure, they gave no intimation of their intention until they thought it ripe for execution; but their plan being matured, on the 1st of September a proclamation was issued for dissolving the parliament. Besides the prevalence of a spirit so favourable to the ministerial party, there was another circumstance which tended to promote their success in the new election: various members of opposition, tired with long disappointment, began to consider their efforts useless, and determined to decline being candidates for again sitting in the legislature. From these different causes, the election of 1780 afforded much fewer disputes than any which had taken place from the beginning of the reign. Among the most warmly contested

General election.

Contest for Westminster.

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contested was the city of Westminster, for which two candidates contended, lord Lincoln and Mr. Fox, and the great champion of opposition was elected by a numerous majority on the 10th of October, a day ever since deemed worthy of anniversary celebration by those politicians who identify the conduct of the orator with the principles of the British constitution, and consecrated to remembrance as an epoch in the history of modern whiggism triumphant. The new parliament was summoned to meet on the 31st of October; but before our narrative follows its deliberations, it must exhibit a short view of foreign interests and affairs, which, relating to Britain, very early occupied its attention and deliberation.

Mr. Fox is chosen on the 10th of October, which thenceforward is consecrated to anniversary celebration.

Continental affairs.

THOUGH Britain, during the American war, had less connection with continental powers than at any other period of this last century, yet her contest with her colonies was a subject of the most interesting concern to the neighbouring nations. During a great part of the war, tranquillity prevailing in the northern and eastern states of Europe allowed them an almost undivided attention to the contest between Britain and America. The only interruption of the peace of Germany and Russia arose from a dispute about the electorate of Bavaria. The king of Prussia had in a few years improved his share of the Polish spoils to the highest advantage, and greatly meliorated the condition of recent as well as hereditary subjects: indeed, though his warmest admirers must admit that his ambition often violated justice in acquiring dominions, his severest enemies must allow that he rendered his acquisitions more beneficial, and their inhabitants happier, than he found them when they became subjects to his government. The emperor Joseph was equally ambitious, but much inferior in wisdom of plan, or in steadiness of execution. On the death of the elector of Bavaria, this prince attempted to revive obsolete claims to the reversion of his dominions; and in

The character of Joseph opens; he aspires at the possession of Bavaria.

the beginning of 1778, actually marched troops towards Munich, and dispossessed the elector Palatine, the real heir, of the whole of that territory. Frederic justly considered this step as a violation of the Germanic constitution, and determined without delay to resist such an encroachment. He knew, that notwithstanding his alliance with Austria, cemented by the recent affiance of the royal families, France would regard with jealousy such an accession to the emperor's power; but engaged in schemes of maritime aggrandisement, would not employ any effectual efforts. He himself therefore saw that the protection of Bavaria must rest chiefly on his policy and power; and before he would interrupt the improvement of his kingdom by drawing the sword, he tried negociation, opened a correspondence with the emperor, and professed a disposition to listen to his claims, to learn their extent and validity, and to admit them if they should prove well-founded. The Austrian pretensions were so very weak, that even the ability of Kaunitz could not render them plausible, or prevent easy refutation. The empress-queen, evidently convinced that her son's demands were ill-founded, and that assertion would be impolitic, was pacifically disposed, but her son was resolved to maintain them by force, and encouraged in his obstinacy by his ministers, who chose to worship the rising sun. Frederic engaged the empress Catharine to second his opposition to the aspiring views of Joseph, and convinced her that it was the interest of the Russians to hinder the emperor, who was only entitled to be the first prince in Germany, from governing that great empire with despotic authority. Finding that the Austrian prince had collected large bodies of troops from Italy, Flanders, and Hungary, into Bohemia, he drew a no less formidable force to his own frontiers. Joseph, in a letter, endeavoured to justify his claims by arguments; but soon finding, in the answer of

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Is opposed by Frederic.

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Frederic, that he had to contend with a logician very superior to himself, he was mortified, and sent an angry reply, expressing his disposition to take a lesson from Frederic in the art of war.[b] To this effusion of galled pride, the hero sent a wise, temperate, and firm answer[c]; and finding hostilities unavoidable, with his usual ability he formed a comprehensive scheme to annoy his antagonist in various quarters; with his usual rapidity he commenced his operations, and established a decisive superiority over the arms of Joseph. Catharine meanwhile, with a view to obtain influence in the empire by espousing its cause, sent a considerable body of troops to join Frederic. Maria Theresa strongly urged her son to peace; but having conceived the hopes of rekindling the war between Turkey and Russia, and thus having himself only to contend with Prussia, he would listen to no proposals. At last, however, in spring 1779, learning that Russia had entirely composed her differences with Turkey, and was preparing a great army to co-operate with Frederic, he became accessible to pacific propositions. A congress was held at Teschen: Frederic, equally triumphant in the cabinet as in the field, without ostentatiously dictating, actually framed the terms. Joseph acknowledged the right of the elector Palatine as heir to the sovereignty of Bavaria, renounced his claims, and virtually confessed that he had been disturbing the peace of Germany without tenable grounds. Commercial advantages in the last century transcended not only the experience, but even the imagination of former times, and rendered the formation and extension of mercantile establishments, and a marine force, one of the primary objects of policy with European nations; a natural, though not a wise concomitant of the desire of such a source of benefit, is jealousy of a

Hostilities between Prussia and Austria,

are terminated by the peace of Teschen.

[b] Gillies's Frederic, p. 476.

[c] Frederic's manifesto, State Papers, July 7, 1778.

state

state that possesses it in a superior degree. Envying the pre-eminence of Britain, maritime potentates anxiously beheld the progress of a quarrel by which they conceived her naval superiority must be considerably impaired. The most powerful of these states formed the vain hope of dispossessing Britain of her supremacy, and with that view, by unprovoked aggression, involved us in war. The other naval states did not openly combine with the house of Bourbon, but secretly favoured both those nations, and the colonies revolted from Britain. Deeply indebted to this country for maritime support and accommodation during her war with Turkey, Russia had been among the first to act hostilely herself, and encourage others to enmity.

Continental powers are jealous of British commercial and naval greatness.

Conduct of Russia.

By the received law of nations in modern Europe, when a war broke out between any of the powers, on the one hand neutral states were not to be interrupted in their general trade with the belligerent parties, but on the other hand were to convey to neither, naval or military stores. Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and Holland, entered into an association for promoting a scheme which altered the public law concerning the right of neutral states to convey warlike stores. This was the treaty concluded at Copenhagen, on the 19th of July 1780, under the name of the ARMED NEUTRALITY.[d] The professed object of this combination was to protect, by an armed force, every species of neutral trade. The treaty set out with declaring, that the contracting parties entertained the most cordial amity for the several belligerent powers, and professed the strictest impartiality. It declared, they would carry on no contraband trade; but narrowed this definition into literal interpretation, and designedly omitted the spirit and object. They founded the asserted privilege of carrying what commodities they chose to

Armed neutrality.

[d] See State Papers, July 1780.

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the warring powers, not upon the EXISTING LAW OF NATIONS, but upon *natural right:* neutral ships were not to be searched without a material and well-grounded cause, of which the contracting parties were to be the sole judges. The associated powers engaged to protect neutral trade, and reciprocally, severally, and jointly, to maintain a force for that purpose. They declared, that an injury done to any one of them as a neutral trader, should be accounted an injury done to all; and that, both jointly and severally, unless it was redressed, they should issue orders for reprisals. The association was to continue during the war, and should notify to the belligerent powers the existence of the treaty, its objects, and their resolutions to employ force for its support. Every person acquainted with the maritime force and situation of the several nations, clearly perceived that this plan, ostensibly impartial, was really meant to injure Britain. As the principal articles of warlike, especially naval, stores, came from Norway and the Baltic, England, from her local situation, had the means of intercepting such commodities much more than her southern enemies; she had also a superior maritime force; a much greater proportion of naval stores could be carried into Britain in her ships, than to Spain, or even to France, in their ships: the conveyance of stores, therefore, in neutral bottoms, was a greater advantage to her enemies than to Britain; they would reap the beneficial fruits from the neutral association, while Britain would lose in the same proportion that her enemies gained. The contracting parties could not but see that this compact was injurious to Britain, therefore their intentions must have been inimical.

BRITAIN considered this convention as a proof of unfriendly dispositions and designs in all the parties; but a variety of other causes combined to aggravate her displeasure towards the United Provinces. That

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State and interest of Holland.

the reader may have a complete view of the dispute between Great Britain and Holland, it is necessary to consider, not only recent, but distant portions of history, as the proximate causes of quarrel originated in very remote circumstances. From the first establishment of the Dutch commonwealth, two parties existed, which alternately predominated. The one consisted of the adherents of the princes of Orange, the first champions and successful vindicators of their rights and liberties; the other, of those who either by birth inherited, or by fortune or merit acquired, rank and influence. Gratitude for recent delivery was about to confer on William I. prince of Orange, a limited hereditary sovereignty, when assassination prevented the design from being accomplished.[e] Maurice, his son and successor in the stadtholdership, being then a boy, could not profit by the occasion while it lasted, and notwithstanding the splendor of his subsequent exploits, the services which he performed, and the prosperity and glory to which he raised the republic, was never able to recover the opportunity. He and his successors naturally looked back with regret to that sovereignty which they had almost obtained, and endeavoured to enlarge to the utmost extent their official powers as stadtholders. The principal citizens, on the other hand, who had grown up along with the fortune of the state, not only opposed their designs, but endeavoured to limit their power, which they considered as becoming dangerous to public liberty, and inimical to the principles of the constitution. The bitterness of such a contest soon effaced from the minds of the nobles all the signal benefits which had been conferred on the state by the successive heroes of the Orange family. Great generals seemed no longer necessary in a season of peace and prosperity; nor did it follow, because it

[e] See Watson's History of Philip II.

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had hitherto so proved, that every prince of Orange was to be an illustrious captain; therefore the aristocratic party proposed the total abolition of the office of stadtholder, and the distribution of its various powers among their own leaders. Such was the origin and foundation of that republican faction which is distinguished in the history of Holland, and which, under various denominations, subsisted from the days of prince Maurice and Barneveldt to modern times. It was the constant and obvious policy of France, to maintain her influence in the councils of Holland, and, at the same time, to restrain and weaken, as much as possible, the power and political activity of the republic. The princes of the house of Orange were generally inimical to the views of France, and linked by blood and alliance with Britain. This state of affairs occasioned a permanent enmity between France and the house of Orange, and naturally produced an intimate connexion between that monarch and the aristocratic party. France diligently cultivated her influence with the anti-stadtholderian faction of Holland. William III., succeeded to the stadtholderate when he was only a child; and during his minority, the nobles, under the name of the Louvestein party, became extremely powerful, and being headed by the celebrated de Wit, were able totally to abolish the office: the violent irruption of Louis XIV. into Holland, however; prompted the States to raise to power the party and individual most inimical to France, and most able to repress the unjustifiable ambition of that aspiring neighbour. The delivery of his country by William III.; the very high character and great influence of that prince, which was increased by his power from the time he became king of England; the resentment of the Dutch against the French, and their alarm from the ambitious politics of Louis; repressed the party which derived its chief support from Gallic policy.

On the death of William III. the stadtholderate became extinct, the States not chusing to renew it in favour of that part of his family which had succeeded to the title of Orange as well as to the principal part of his inheritance. Union, however, of views and interests with England, in repelling the ambition of the French, and opposing the succession of a Bourbon prince to the throne of Spain; rendered the states-general no less inimical to Louis, and friendly to England and the emperor, than they had been when William governed both countries; and the ability and address of Marlborough procured such personal influence with the states-general, that the French party were not able to defeat the measures of the grand alliance. Towards the end of queen Anne's reign, the Dutch were closely connected with the antigallican party in England; but during the peace, which lasted for so many years after the treaty of Utrecht, the French party in Holland appears to have gained ground. The co-operation of the Dutch with Britain and the house of Austria in the war which commenced in 1740, was very inefficient; and to the influence of the partisans of France may, in a great degree, be ascribed that failure of Dutch exertion, which prevented the extraordinary efforts of the British troops from being victorious at Fontenoy. The same want of cordiality in the cause was obvious in other actions, particularly in the battle of Laffelt. In consequence of their victories, the French penetrated into Dutch Flanders, and prepared to descend on the island of Zealand. Perceiving the danger which impended from the progress of the French, the Dutch determined to have recourse to a measure that had formerly saved them from ruin, and to declare the prince of Orange stadtholder. In the year 1748, the office was renewed in full plenitude of power in favour of the late prince of Orange, with the additional security of being rendered hereditary

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ditary not only in the male, but the female lines of his family. This settlement appeared to cut off entirely the views of the adverse faction; but though depressed, or at least withheld from any means of political exertion, they were still potent and numerous, and only waited for a favourable opportunity which should operate as a signal for union and exertion. The prince of Orange dying in 1751, and leaving his son, the present prince, a child of three years old, the long minority much weakened the influence of the stadtholderian party, and the Gallican faction became powerful. At the commencement of the seven years war, Britain claimed six thousand men, who had been promised as auxiliaries by a defensive treaty; but the Dutch refused to comply, and became the carriers of contraband goods with impunity, until Mr. Pitt was raised to the head of affairs. They even privately co-operated with our French enemies, while a French party openly avowed its enmity to this country. The French interest having rapidly advanced during the non-age, continued to be very powerful even during the administration of the present prince, and used every artifice to inflame the jealousy of the Dutch against the great naval power, and particularly the increase of commerce, which Britain had attained.

Holland favours the revolted colonies.

SUCH was the state of parties and sentiments in Holland, when war broke out between this country and her colonies. From the beginning of the contest the Dutch had secretly favoured America, but became more open in assistance as the fortune of England began to decline, and as her enemies multiplied. Holland protected American ships when laden with plunder taken from British merchants, and even suffered a provincial pirate to take refuge in the Texel; in the East and West Indies she assisted our enemies, and in America our revolted subjects. In Europe, contrary both to the general law

law of nations and to specific treaties, she conveyed warlike stores to our enemies. Holland had sent an armed force to prevent our ships from acting, according to the law of nations, and the spirit and letter of particular treaties, in searching ships which should be suspected of carrying warlike stores. Her admiral, count Byland, fired upon British ships that were sent to examine her vessels in the manner prescribed by the treaty of 1674; and various amicable representations and remonstrances were made by Great Britain[f] to the states-general, but without effect. Great Britain, when pressed by so many enemies, demanded the succours which were stipulated by different treaties, and especially that of 1716[g], but obtained no satisfactory answer. All these circumstances, combined with her accession to the armed neutrality, not only indicated, but manifested, in the republic, a disposition hostile to her natural ally and most liberal benefactor.

Remonstrances of Britain.

An incident now happened, which discovered to what extent the enmity of this pretended friend was carried: Mr. Henry Laurens, late president of the American congress, had been appointed ambassador to Holland, and was captured in a Philadelphia ship in the beginning of September on the banks of Newfoundland by a British frigate. The package which contained his papers had been thrown overboard, but its bulk preventing it from suddenly sinking, it was saved by the boldness and dexterity of a British seaman, and most of the papers recovered from the effects of the water. Mr. Laurens being brought to England, was committed on a charge of high treason. When interrogated, he made no answer to any question of importance, but his papers were sufficiently explicit. A treaty of amity and commerce between America and Holland ap-

Discovery of a treaty between the Dutch and Americans.

[f] See the correspondence between British ministers, the ambassador sir Joseph Yorke, and the Dutch; State Papers, 1780.

[g] See Chalmers's Collection of Treaties.

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peared to have been in agitation for more than two years, and Mr. Laurens was to bring the same to a conclusion. The negociators on the side of Holland, were M. Van Burkel, pensionary and counsellor to the city of Amsterdam (an officer of great weight and power), with other members of the registry, assisted by some great commercial houses of that city. Sir Joseph Yorke, the British ambassador at the Hague, was immediately instructed how to proceed: he accordingly expostulated in strong memorials to the states-general, and represented to them the clandestine correspondence which Amsterdam had long been carrying on with rebels against a sovereign to whom the republic was joined in the strictest ties of friendship. He therefore demanded in the name of the king his master, not only a formal disavowal of so irregular a conduct, but insisted on speedy satisfaction adequate to the offence, and the punishment of the pensionary Van Burkel and his accomplices, as disturbers of the public, and violators of the rights of nations. To this remonstrance an immediate answer not having been given, its substance was repeated in still stronger terms, accompanied by the following intimation: "His majesty, by the complaints made through his ambassador, has placed the punishment and the reparation in the hands of your High Mightinesses; and it will not be until the last extremity, that is to say, in case of a denial of justice, or of silence, which must be interpreted as a refusal, that the king will take them upon himself." [h]. Here one nation complained to another of an injury received from subjects of that other, and demanded public disavowal and punishment of the aggressors. It rested with the other nation, either to disavow the act and punish the actors, or by refusing satisfaction justify what had been done. The latter alternative the

[h] See State Papers from Nov. 18, to Dec. 29, 1780, relative to a rupture with Holland.

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states-general chose; they did not answer the memorial, and thus compelled the British sovereign to seek by force that redress which peaceable application could not obtain. Sir Joseph Yorke received orders to withdraw from the Hague; and that step was followed, before the close of the year, by a declaration of hostilities against Holland. Manifestoes followed from both parties; but, on considering the whole circumstances of the case, an impartial reader can entertain no doubt that the Dutch were the aggressors.

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Rupture with Holland.

Dutch are the aggressors.

On the 31st of October parliament met, and, before they proceeded to business, ministers proposed a new speaker. Sir Fletcher Norton had frequently thwarted and censured administration, and given umbrage to the court party; but he excited the greatest displeasure in 1777, when, on presenting bills for paying the civil list debts, he made a speech enlarging on the magnificence of the commons, and recommending economy in the management of their gift. Ministers considering such an adviser as by no means proper for being speaker of the house, embraced the earliest possible opportunity of dismissing him from that office. With this view they praised the firmness, prudence and diligence, with which he had discharged his laborious duties, but lamented that his ardent zeal and indefatigable efforts had very much impaired his constitution: actuated by a grateful regard to the ease and health of so valuable a member, the house, according to ministers, ought to relieve him from so troublesome an employment, and substitute a more able-bodied man to preside over the commons. They therefore recommended Mr. Cornwall, as a gentleman in every other respect qualified for the speaker's chair, and also possessing sufficient corporal vigour. Opposition expressed the greatest contempt for the ridiculous farce that ministers were acting, and imputed the proposed dismissal to ministerial resentment

Meeting of Parliament.

Choice of a new speaker.

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ment on account of sir Fletcher's upright conduct. On a division, the nomination of Mr. Cornwall was carried by a majority of 203 to 134.

The king's speech.

His majesty's speech, after expressing confidence in the loyal and patriotic dispositions and wishes of his people, described the mighty efforts of France and Spain to support the American rebellion, and destroy the commerce and reduce the power of Britain; the glorious efforts and brilliant successes of the British arms by sea and land, which had frustrated the designs, and disappointed the expectations of our enemies; and his confidence, that continuance in these exertions would bring the war to a happy conclusion. After the repetition of reiterated arguments against the origin and conduct of the American war, opposition descended to the events of the last campaign, and insisted that, though the victories were most splendidly honourable to the British forces, they did not, in the result, advance the ministerial object of conquering America. They had often predicted, that certain successful operations would terminate the war; but as often as the predictions were made, they were falsified. British soldiers and sailors fought valiantly in the year 1780, as they had always fought; they had gained battles and taken towns, but to what purpose? Could any man say, that the conquest of America was less distant, than when we had driven our colonies to revolt?

Mr. Fox's plan of attack against ministers.

He begins with charges against lord Sandwich.

Mr. Fox, resuming his usual function of accusing ministers, gave notice that he should after the holidays move, first, for the dismissal of the earl of Sandwich; and then for bringing him to condign punishment: that he should found the motions on two different causes; for advising his majesty to promote sir Hugh Palliser to the government of Greenwich hospital; and for the shameful neglect of the navy. Sir Hugh Palliser had not taken his seat as member for Huntingdon, when Mr. Fox intimated

mated his intention of censuring his recent appointment; but being informed of this intimation, he speedily repaired to the house, in order personally to support his own cause. The 4th of December being the day appointed to take the navy estimates into consideration, it was presumed that Mr. Fox would embrace the opportunity of attacking the conduct and late appointment of Palliser; that gentleman therefore resolved to appear in vindication of his character. Mr. Fox commenced his attack: sir Hugh Palliser (he said) had been convicted of a false and malicious accusation against his superior officer, and, on charges exhibited against himself, barely acquitted by a court-martial; nevertheless, he was promoted to a post of distinction and profit, which had heretofore been held by men of the first naval merit, and was intended as a retreat and reward to those who had essentially served their country. This appointment, he considered, as the highest insult that could be offered to the navy, and the greatest stigma that could be affixed to the service. He did not blame the person who accepted that place, but the first lord of the admiralty, whose conduct in it ought to be the subject of their inquiry. Lord North answered Mr. Fox, and displayed one of his chief parliamentary excellencies, ability and readiness of reply. The appointment of sir Hugh Palliser (he said) was not the act of the first lord of the admiralty alone, but of the other ministers also. Mr. Fox's principal objection to the nomination was, that the court-martial upon admiral Keppel had imputed unworthy motives to his accuser. Therein that tribunal had exceeded its jurisdiction; the court did not sit on admiral Palliser, but on admiral Keppel. They had *not* heard Palliser in his own defence, but pronounced an injurious opinion, without establishing its grounds. The second objection of Mr. Fox was, that sir Hugh Palliser had been barely acquitted; but his interpretation

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1780. pretation was confuted by the sentence itself, and especially the following words: "The court having taken the whole of the evidence into consideration, both on the part of the prosecution as well as in favour of the prisoner, were of opinion, that the conduct of sir Hugh Palliser, was so far from being reprehensible on the 27th and 28th of July, that in many parts it appeared exemplary and highly meritorious." Exemplary conduct meant such as was a proper example for other officers to follow, and a fit object for imitation. According to this natural and true construction of the sentence, the minister contended that sir Hugh Palliser was undoubtedly an object of requital; and after his conduct had been declared highly meritorious and exemplary, administration would have been criminally culpable if they had neglected to give a suitable reward. On the 6th of December the recess took place, and

1781. parliament did not again meet until the 25th of January. Papers respecting the rupture with Holland were laid before the houses. Ministers entered into a detailed vindication of their proceedings, to prove that the Dutch had violated both general neutrality and particular treaties; they contended, that as we had applied in vain for redress, hostilities were therefore unavoidable. Opposition members, with their usual ingenuity, endeavoured to demonstrate our enemy to be in the right, and the British government to be in the wrong; and for that purpose they contrasted the present system respecting continental connexions, with the policy of former periods since the revolution. Ministers replied, that their object was the same as the purposes of William and Anne, to humble the house of Bourbon; but that the Dutch had, contrary to wisdom and their own interest, changed their measures, and, misled by a factious party, assisted their natural enemies against their natural friends. In answer to fanciful analogies, taken from remote and dissimilar

dissimilar periods of history, and theories built upon these, they referred to the existing case, as proved by authentic documents, to evince that Holland was the aggressor, and by refusing satisfaction had forced Britain to go to war.

His motion concerning the appointment of sir Hugh Palliser.

ON the first of February, Mr. Fox, in pursuance of his notice, moved, that the appointment of sir Hugh Palliser to be governor of Greenwich hospital, after he had been declared by a court-martial guilty of having preferred a malicious and ill-founded accusation against his commanding officer, was a measure totally subversive of the discipline, and derogatory to the honour of the navy. He exhibited the whole detail of the proceedings by or concerning admirals Keppel and Palliser, with all their consequences, real and supposed, in one view, in order to support by his former arguments the present motion. Ministers having replied by repeating their former reasonings, offered an amendment destructive of the original proposition, and carried it in the affirmative by a majority of two hundred and fourteen to one hundred and forty-nine.

Mr. Burke resumes his plan of economical reform.

WHILE Mr. Fox was thus eagerly employed in attacking ministry, Mr. Burke again attempted to introduce his plan for financial reform; and from the new parliament professed to expect a support which he had not experienced from the former. The bill itself not being changed since the former year, and the genius of Mr. Burke having then brought forward every important argument that could be adduced, the substance of his reasoning on the present occasion was necessarily similar to his arguments in the preceding session: the bill was thrown out at the second reading, by a majority much smaller than for a long time had usually voted in favour of ministry.

Beginning of lord Chatham's second son, Mr. William Pitt.

THE debate previous to this division is remarkable for a circumstance distinct from the intrinsic merits of the question; it called forward, for the first time in

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in parliament, the genius of Mr. William Pitt, second son of the illustrious earl of Chatham. At the general election, this youth, in the twenty-second year of his age, entered parliament, while the expectations of all ranks and parties were aroused in his favour. It was publicly known that his illustrious father had conceived the highest opinion of his talents and acquirements. Lord Chatham had himself inspected the education of his children; and though immersed in public business, under the pressure of age and bodily infirmity, with anxious delight had tutored, formed, and directed the opening understanding of such a promising son. In every stage of his education, young Pitt impressed all those who knew him with admiration of his talents and acquirements. As he advanced in years, he had progressively risen in estimation, and was chiefly eminent for masculine strength and compass of intellectual powers, rapidly mastering the various departments of knowledge and science, studying as a scholar, comprehending and generalising as a philosopher; bold and original in conception, profound in research, indefatigable in application, he had a firmness of temper, which steadily pursued what he perceived to be right, and adhered to his own plans of conduct, undisturbed by the ridicule of frivolity, and unseduced by the allurements of vice. At the university, he was deemed far superior to ordinary men, and as one destined to transcend his contemporaries as much in the highest deliberative and executive departments of public life, as he then surpassed them in the erudition and science of academic retirement. Some of his friends at Cambridge proposed that he should stand candidate for representing the university in parliament, but declining this honour unless unanimously offered, he was returned for Poole. In the speech which he now delivered, Mr. Pitt fully justified the anticipations of the public, and was considered from that time as an important

portant accession to parliamentary ability. Although the young orator voted and spoke on the side of opposition, he did not connect himself with any of its members as a party, but, like his renowned father, he trusted entirely to himself, without seeking eminence through the collective influence of a combination. The same session brought another splendid addition to parliamentary genius: Mr. Sheridan, after far surpassing all contemporary writers, and indeed all of the eighteenth century, in comic poetry, first exhibited in the senate that strong, brilliant, and versatile genius, which had acquired the dramatic palm merely because its possessor had chosen that species of intellectual exercise.

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The celebrated comic poet, Sheridan, turns his extraordinary talents to politics.

Sir Philip Jennings Clarke, notwithstanding his repeated defeats, resumed his design of excluding contractors from a seat in the house. A bill which he brought in for that purpose, was thrown out by a majority of one hundred and twenty to one hundred; and a bill proposed by Mr. Crewe, to restrain revenue officers from voting at elections for members of parliament, met with a similar fate.

India affairs are extensively considered in parliament.

India affairs now came before the house: petitions were presented from the natives of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, complaining that the supreme court of judicature established by the act of 1773; had greatly exceeded its powers; that it extended its jurisdiction to persons whom it was not the intention of the king and parliament to subject to its decrees; that it had taken cognizance of matters both originally and pending the suit, the exclusive determination of which the petitioners humbly conceived it to have been the intention of the king and parliament to leave to other courts; that the judges considered the criminal law of England as in force and binding upon the natives of Bengal, though utterly repugnant to the laws and customs by which they had formerly been governed. Petitions were presented to parliament by three classes, who were

affected

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affected by what they conceived to be an unwarranted assumption of jurisdiction; first, by the governor-general and council; secondly, by the agents of the British subjects; and thirdly, by the East India company. A select committee was, at the instance of general Smith, appointed to consider India affairs, and the proposer was nominated chairman. To this committee the petitions were referred: the investigation of their grounds produced a variety of information, which afterwards extended the objects of the inquiry to deliberative and executive acts, as well as judicative, and eventually laid the foundation of a very celebrated prosecution. All parties appeared to agree, that in the imperfect state of their knowledge of facts it was proper to proceed with great caution and delicacy, yet on a summary review, the chief members of both sides appeared to think, that there were among the company's servants counteracting interests that very materially injured the value of India possessions. The select committee having been appointed in February, had already presented a long report, when intelligence arrived of such a state of affairs in the Carnatic, as induced the minister to propose a secret committee, for the purpose of inquiring into the general management of the state of affairs in India, including the farther investigation of the subjects suggested by the petitions. After some objections from opposition to the secrecy, the motion was carried, a committee was chosen from both sides of the house, and Mr. Henry Dundas appointed chairman. In consequence of the report of the secret committee, a bill was proposed by general Smith, for a new regulation of the supreme judicature in India, which, after some partial changes, was passed into a law.

Two committees of inquiry are appointed;

one has for its chairman Mr. Henry Dundas.

THE minister submitted various propositions to the house respecting Indian affairs, but rather as subjects of discussion than as measures for adoption. Of these the most important were, Whether it would

Questions for future deliberation respecting India, proposed by lord North.

be proper to throw the trade to India open; to grant a monopoly to another company; or to bestow a new charter on the present company, and reserve to the public a great share of their profits? Whether it would be proper for the crown to take the territorial possessions and revenues entirely into its own hands, or to leave them to the management of a mercantile company? These topics underwent a variety of discussion, but without producing any efficient resolution during the present session. As themes, however, of reflection and argument, they turned the attention of members to the contemplation of Indian affairs, and prepared them for understanding the nature and tendency of such plans as should be afterwards proposed. Lord North introduced a temporary and short bill, continuing the company's monopoly for a limited time, until a more permanent and comprehensive plan should be formed. By this bill the company was to pay four hundred and two thousand pounds to government, as a share of its past profits, and also an annual sum in future.

In the house of lords the duke of Bolton proposed an inquiry relative to the capture of the East and West India convoy, in the course of which much censure was passed on the general conduct of the navy; but his grace at length withdrew his motion.

Petitions from counties for the redress of grievances.

Although the riots had damped the spirit of association, yet some of the counties continued to associate for the purpose of procuring a redress of grievances, and appointed delegates to give support and efficacy to their acts. These, as acting for their constituents, having assembled, prepared a petition to the house of commons, stating the alleged grievances, and the desired redress. There were many who, admitting the existence of them, and the necessity of a remedy, yet totally disapproved of such a convention. The petition was therefore subscribed by three several delegates, in

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their individual and not their collective capacities. When presented however to parliament, the powers that had been assumed by delegates were the chief subjects of animadversion by the opposers of the petition, which was rejected by a majority of two hundred and twelve to one hundred and thirty-five. The house of commons on this occasion shewed a jealous vigilance of an encroachment on the established constitution, by discountenancing a representative system which was formed by detached individuals, and unknown to the laws of the land.

NEAR the close of the session an inconvenience that had arisen from the marriage-act 1751, produced the correction of a clause in that law. It had been enacted, that no marriage could be valid unless it was solemnized in a church or other place wherein the celebration of nuptials was lawful before the act. A pauper, who had been married in a chapel erected after that period, being sent with a large family to the parish wherein he conceived himself entitled to a settlement as a married man, was refused, on the ground that, not having complied with the terms of the statute, he was not a married man. An application was made to the court of king's bench; and the judges, though they lamented the hardness of the case, yet, in conformity to the statute, were under the necessity of justifying the recusants. Through the ignorance or inadvertency of the parties and the clergymen, many marriages were in the same predicament, and great numbers of innocent children, without any immoral conduct or intention on the part of their parents, were bastardised. Lord Beaucamp proposed an act of retrospective operation, legalising such marriages, and legitimating their issue. So humane and equitable a bill was unanimously and speedily passed. The consideration of this particular clause led many to take a view of the marriage-act in general; and among others Mr. Charles Fox, who, employing the

the arguments that had been used in opposition to the bill in 1751, and especially with distinguished ability by his father, proposed a total repeal of the law, and brought in a bill for that purpose: but it was rejected without a division. Mr. Fox on the occasion viewed the subject in a light rather democratical, considering the inclination of the contracting parties as the *sole* criterion of proper marriages. His friend Mr. Burke expressed a different opinion, and contended, that during the non-age of parties, the sanction of parents or other nearest relations was requisite in that act, the most important of their lives, as well as in others of less comparative moment. The marriage-act (he said) justly hit the medium between close and mischievous restraint, and the former laxity which had been the cause of such disorders, and so many just complaints. Concerning the control to which natural liberty should be subjected for the sake of general expediency, these two illustrious friends manifested, on this incidental occasion, a diversity of opinion, which was not much regarded at the time, but from subsequent proceedings and events has been carefully noted by examiners of the series and system of their respective principles and conduct.

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Different opinions of Messrs. Fox and Burke on the marriage-law.

THE pecuniary transactions of this year were subjects of the severest animadversion. The supplies were granted without opposition, though not without reproach of ministers, for the uselessness, through their misconduct, of the most lavish grants. Ninety-one thousand seamen were voted, and, including foreign troops, about eighty thousand landmen. The whole amount required for the public service was 22,158,337*l.* To provide so large a sum, besides the ordinary means, with the assistance of contributions from the bank and East India company, twelve millions were raised by a loan. The subscribers to this loan, for every hundred pounds contributed, obtained one hundred and fifty in annuities,

Supplies.

Extravagant terms of the noted loan for twelve millions.

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after the rate of three per cent. per annum, and an additional twenty-five pounds in an annuity at four per cent. per annum; which rate of interest was to be continued until the annuity should be redeemed. 480,000*l.* were raised by a lottery, the tickets in which were distributed among the subscribers in the proportion of four tickets for every thousand pounds subscribed. By comparing the terms of this loan with the price of the several funds on which it was negociated, it was immediately seen that subscribers had a gain of more than ten per cent. besides the current interest, and in fact the omnium bore an immediate premium of ten per cent. The bestowal of such very advantageous terms on the subscribers to the loan underwent a severe scrutiny. Mr. Fox inveighed against it, as, in the first place, a much less favourable bargain than might have been obtained. The minister had been offered money to the amount of thirty-eight millions, at five per cent. without any premium, and had chosen to borrow it at sixteen per cent. for the first year, making near six per cent. for ever[1], and imposing an unnecessary annuity on this country, of near one hundred thousand pounds. Mr. Fox contended,

	£	s.	d.
[1] Average price of three per cents. was 58½, therefore 150 was	87	15	0
Four per cents. at 72½, 25 is	18	2	6
Lottery tickets at £12 10*s.* four for £1,000 is £50 for £100	5	0	0
	£110	17	6

The current interest was for each hundred pounds £4 10*s.* in the three per cents. £10 in the four, and £15 on the lottery tickets; so that the minister paid a premium of near eleven per cent. for borrowing at more than legal interest.

Interest of loan	5	5	0
Interest of premium	0	10	9
	£5	15	9

15*s.* 9*d.* beyond legal interest on each £100.
£100. 15*s.* 9*d.* £12,000,000. £94,500.

Thus an annuity of £94,500 is for ever paid by this country more than was necessary for the same sum of money, if lord North had made the best terms he could for the good of his country.

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in very forcible reasoning, that such was not the conduct of a competent and faithful steward; that the minister must either have been grossly ignorant, criminally negligent, or wilfully treacherous to his country. He could not be so ignorant as to suppose it was better to pay six per cent. than five; neither could it be imputed to negligence, because the subscribers were the minister's own particular friends. His favourite contractor, Mr. Atkinson, for one, had the disposal of three millions three hundred thousand, the immediate profit of which was three hundred and thirty thousand pounds. The other shares were also distributed among the minister's adherents. Mr. Fox proposed that the lists of both subscribers and proposers should be laid before the house. Lord North by no means consented to the application of this test; cautiously avoiding a detailed answer to Mr. Fox, he in general declared that he had made the best bargain he could, but opposed all inquiry into its circumstances. Hurtful, Mr. Fox observed, as the financial waste was to the pecuniary interest of the country, it was still more injurious to political, by feeding corruption already so enormous. Mr. Fox so completely discussed this subject, that though afterwards frequently debated both by the commons and the peers, no new facts or arguments were adduced.

Lord North incorrupt himself, permits wasteful corruption in others.

THE impartial historian cannot justify the public steward for so prodigal a waste of the public money; but must exhibit the twelve millions loan of 1781 as very inconsistent with the character of an able and upright minister. On the other hand, however, he will not hastily impute such donatives to personal corruption. The individual integrity of lord North has never been impeached; his bitterest political enemies never alleged that there was any defalcation of national treasure for his own use[k]; but what

[k] Personal enmity, the amiable character of this minister, has, I believe, never provoked.

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Inefficacy of talents and benevolent dispositions, without firmness of resolution, in arduous situations.

his own rectitude prevented in himself, his inattention suffered in others. With great talents, and manifold acquirements, of an acute understanding, and benevolent dispositions, the minister possessed a constitutional indolence, which, when mingled with good nature, often allows to friends and connexions much more indulgence than the stern austerity of rigid morality would permit; and in gratifying the wishes, or promoting the interest of the objects of its attachment, frequently transcends the bounds of duty. From this source probably arose the largesses of a minister, than whom no one did more to serve his friends. At the same time, a considerable portion of his donatives must be imputed to political considerations, to the desire of extending his influence, and fortifying himself against the formidable host by which he was assailed.

Session rises.

On the 18th of July the session was closed with a speech from the throne, in which the King thanked his parliament for their exertions during so long and important a session. He expressed his satisfaction, that, in the midst of the difficulties of so complicated and extensive a war, the ancient spirit of the British nation was not diminished. He approved highly of the consideration that had been bestowed on the affairs of India, and trusted the business would be resumed and completed at their next meeting. "Peace (he concluded) is the earnest wish of my heart, but I have too firm a reliance on the spirit and resources of the nation, and the powerful assistance of my parliament, and the protection of a just and all-ruling Providence, to accept in any terms and conditions, than such as may consist with the honour and dignity of my crown, and the permanent interest and security of my people."

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East Indies.—Hyder Ally invades the Carnatic—colonel Baillie defeats him, but is drawn into an ambuscade, overpowered by numbers, and destroyed.—Rapid progress of Hyder.—Consternation at Madras—alarm reaches Calcutta.—Sir Eyre Coote sent to command in the Carnatic—comparatively small army.—Plan of operations for 1781.—*Successive victories over Hyder.—Coote restores the British affairs in the Carnatic.—Admiral Hughes destroys Hyder's shipping on the Malabar coast—reduces Dutch settlements.—Europe.—Plans of the house of Bourbon when reinforced by the Dutch.—French invade the island of Jersey—are at first successful, but finally repelled.—Blockade of Gibraltar—British fleet supplies the garrison with provisions—Spaniards resolve to attempt its reduction by storm—immense preparations for this purpose.—General Elliot.—Grand scheme for totally discomfiting the enemy—bold, masterly, and complete disposition—sally. of November 27th—entirely destroys the enemy's preparations.—Darby endeavours to bring the enemy's fleet to battle, but in vain.—The combined fleet of forty-nine ships of the line sails to the Channel—British fleet of thirty ships keeps the sea.—The hostile armada, notwithstanding its superiority, will not venture an attack—retires to harbour.—British trade protected.—Admiral Kempenfelt intercepts a French convoy.—War with Holland.—Action off the Dogger-bank.—Commodore Johnstone's expedition to the Cape of Good Hope—though not entirely successful, captures several valuable prizes.—West Indies.—Tremendous hurricane in the Leeward Islands—in Jamaica—humane endeavours to alleviate the distresses.—Campaign opens.—Reduction of St. Eustatius.—Holland experiences the folly of going to war with Britain.—De Grasse arrives in the West Indies with a greater fleet than the British.—Admiral Hood, detached by Rodney, offers battle to the French—they will not venture a close engagement, but keep a running fight.—A French armament invades Tobago—small garrison there—character and gallant defence of governor Fergusson—his judicious and kind treatment of his negroes—their gratitude, fidelity,*

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and valour—overpowered by numbers, yields by an honourable capitulation.—Rodney endeavours to meet de Grasse, who avoids an encounter.—Spaniards reduce West Florida.—Last efforts of Britain for the recovery of North America—general misinformation and false conclusions of ministers—magnify every transient success—sanguine hopes from the reduction of Carolina, delusive.—Object and plan of the campaign 1781—Lord Cornwallis begins his march.—Expedition of light troops—defeat of the enterprising and brave Tarleton—disadvantage to the British from this disaster.—Battle of Guilford—Cornwallis successful, but with considerable loss.—Operations of Lord Rawdon in Carolina—enterprise, skill, and genius of that commander, but by great superiority of numbers is cut off from communication with Cornwallis—returns to Britain—is succeeded by colonel Stewart, who is obliged to act on the defensive.—Cornwallis enters Virginia—reaches Williamsburg—opposed by an American and French force—establishes himself at Gloucester, in expectation of co-operation from general Clinton.—French and American army near New York.—Washington projects to march against Cornwallis, without being followed by Clinton—dexterous stratagem by which he overreaches the British commander—with his army joins the forces in Virginia.—Cornwallis surrounded—expecting succours from Clinton, resolves to defend himself to the last—skilful and gallant defence—a French fleet blocks up the river—our brave general still holds out—the garrison fast diminishes—a general assault prepared—finding himself totally unable to resist, lord Cornwallis at length surrenders.

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1781. East Indies.

WE left Hyder Ally preparing to enter the Carnatic: for this purpose he had collected a mighty army. The force on the Madras establishment amounted to about thirty thousand men, but was dispersed at great distances, either in quarters, garrison, or upon various detached services; part was employed on the Malabar coast, and a very valuable detachment was in the Guntoor circar, under the conduct of colonel Baillie. The presidency of Madras was not sufficiently impressed with a sense of the nature and extent of Hyder's designs,

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and by no means employed prudent precautions to secure passes, and fortify posts, to prevent his inroads. Hyder having made his way through the Ghauts, on the 22d of July 1780, advanced without opposition into the level country, with desolation and terror, while his son, Tippoo Saib, was sent to the northern circars. Hyder Ally besieged the city of Arcot, which its nabob defended in such a manner as to excite great suspicion of his fidelity. Tippoo Saib advanced with a great body of cavalry upon the northern circars, whilst at the opposite extremity different parties of the enemy were approaching to Madras and the borders of Tinivelly country. Sir Hector Monro, the British general, formed the design of compelling Hyder to raise the siege, and himself effecting a junction with Baillie's detachment, which was marching to the south. Hyder on the approach of Monro's army raised the siege, but occupied such a position as intercepted the communication between colonel Baillie and the main army. Baillie, meanwhile, with a force consisting of above two hundred Europeans and eighteen hundred Sepoys, encountered Tippoo Saib at the head of thirty thousand horse and eight thousand foot, at a place called Perimbaucum[1], where he made masterly dispositions to withstand the prodigious superiority of number. After a very severe action the British gained a complete victory, but for want of cavalry were unable to preserve their baggage. Baillie found that from the intervention of Hyder's army he could not make good a junction with general Monro, and at the same time that it would be impossible long to retain his present post for want of provisions. He sent intelligence of his situation to sir Hector; and colonel Fletcher was dispatched to his assistance, who, after narrowly

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Hyder Ally invades the Carnatic.

Baillie defeats him at Perimbaucum;

1 See Memoirs of the War in Asia, fro 1780 to 1784, by Dr. William Thomson.*

* See Life of Dr. W. T. in Phillips's Public Characters for 1803.

escaping

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escaping being betrayed by his guides, effected a junction with Baillie. Their detachments now prepared to force their way to the British army. Hyder pretended a resolution not to oppose them, and to change his position, but really formed an ambuscade round the road by which they were to pass; while a body of his cavalry, by various movements, diverted the attention of the English camp. On the 10th of September, Baillie's corps advanced into the toils, and were soon surrounded by forty thousand men, besides a corps of European artillery. Notwithstanding this surprise, the English leader made a masterly disposition and gallant resistance. The Mysore troops were giving way in the greatest consternation, and victory appeared to be in the hands of the British, when a fatal accident reversed the fortune of the day: the tumbrils which contained the ammunition suddenly blew up with two dreadful explosions in the centre of the British lines; one whole face of their column was entirely laid open, and their artillery overturned and destroyed. The destruction of men was great, but the total loss of ammunition was still more dreadful to the survivors. Tippoo Saib instantly seized the moment of advantage, and attacked the broken column with his cavalry; he was soon followed by the French corps, the first line of infantry, and entirely overpowered the sepoys in the British service, who, after displaying the most intrepid valour, were cut to pieces. Baillie himself being dangerously wounded, rallied his handful of Britons, formed a square, and his soldiers, without ammunition, fighting with their bayonets, repulsed the Asiatic host, until exhausted rather than conquered they fell, and were trampled by horses and elephants. Among the killed was the brave colonel Fletcher; colonel Baillie, and about two hundred Europeans, were taken prisoners, and exposed to every insult and cruelty that the ingenuity of barbarians could inflict,

but is drawn into an ambuscade.

Valour of the British troops.

Overpowered by numbers.

1781.

inflict, while nothing could exceed their sufferings but the magnanimous and indignant fortitude with which they were borne.[m] This disaster threw the presidency into great consternation and terror; they considered the Carnatic on the eve of being lost, and Madras itself in the greatest danger. Hyder soon resumed the siege of Arcot, took it by assault on the 3d of November, and, three days after, the citadel, though capable of a much longer defence if the nabob had been resolutely faithful. The successes of Hyder caused alarm even at Calcutta: the supreme council placed little reliance on the efforts of the Madras presidency, but having resolved to assist that settlement, and wishing to be assured of the proper application of their aid, they passed a resolution, intreating sir Eyre Coote, a member of their own body and commander in chief of the forces in India, to take the command of the army in the Carnatic. The governor-general exerted himself to reinforce the army destined to act against Hyder, and to provide money for paying and supplying the troops. It was concerted that general Coote should sail immediately for Madras, while admiral Hughes should direct his operations against the ports and shipping of Hyder on the Malabar coast. Sir Eyre Coote arrived at Madras at the close of the year 1780, where he found affairs in a more dismal situation than he had conceived: Hyder Ally had taken every measure which could occur to the most experienced general[n], to distress the British, and to render himself formidable. His military conduct was supported by a degree of political address unequalled by any prince or leader that had yet appeared in Hindostan: his army was now augmented to more than a hundred thousand men, while the force of general Coote did not

Alarm at Madras;

reaches Calcutta.

Sir Eyre Coote sent to command in the Carnatic.

[m] See narrative of the sufferings of the officers and men, Thomson's War in Asia, passim.

[n] This is the substance of Coote's first letter from Madras to the India directory.

exceed

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exceed seven thousand. On the conduct of the general, invigorating and directing this small band, depended the fate of the Carnatic, and probably of all British India.

Comparatively small army.

ENCOURAGED by his victories, Hyder had besieged the fortresses of Vellore, Wandewash, Permacoil, and Chingleput. Having called a council of war, composed of sir Hector Monro, lord Macleod, and general Stuart, the commander in chief consulted them whether it would be better to relieve these garrisons, or proceed immediately against the enemy's army. The former alternative was unanimously adopted, and in a few weeks the British general obliged Hyder to raise all the sieges, and reinforced and supplied the garrisons. The French inhabitants of Pondicherry, notwithstanding the generous treatment which they had received from the English, behaved with the most ungrateful perfidy; they admitted a garrison in the interests of Hyder, and collected a large store of provision, evidently intended to support a fleet and army which were expected from the Mauritius; but Coote effectually crushed this nefarious project, by taking away their arms, destroying the boats, and removing the provisions.

Plan of operations for 1781.

Successive victories of Coote in the Carnatic.

THESE operations, though attended with success, so exhausted the army of Coote, originally small, as to render an immediate attack upon the army of Mysore extremely imprudent, unless it should prove absolutely necessary. Hyder, on the other hand, finding his soldiers discouraged by the late victories of their adversaries, did not deem it expedient to compel the British to an engagement; and during several months no conflicts of any importance took place between the armies. Hyder at length being strongly reinforced, made preparations for the siege of Tritchinopoly. Sir Eyre Coote proposed to march with the army to Porto Novo, as well that he might frustrate the design of the enemy, as to repress

repress his depredation on the side of Tanjore and the southern provinces. The British army was small, and very indifferently provided for the field, but the situation of affairs admitted but of one alternative, either southern India must be abandoned, or an effort must be made for its preservation; and this was one of the cases which have often occurred in British history, in which the most adventurous boldness was the wisest policy.

IMPELLED by these considerations, the British general, with a small but valiant band, on the 16th of June set out in quest of the Mysorean myriads, and arrived at Porto Novo; thence he made an attempt on the fortress of Chillumbrum, but was obliged to retire: nevertheless, he resolved to persist in endeavouring to bring the enemy to battle, to which their commander was now much less indisposed than in the earlier part of the campaign. Hyder was so powerfully reinforced, that confident in his strength, and elated with the repulse of the English, he resolved to hazard an engagement, rather than relinquish his design on Tritchinopoly and the adjacent provinces. Determined to fight, he advanced to meet the English army, and chose a very advantageous position within a short distance of Coote. One of the great difficulties of the English army was the impossibility of obtaining intelligence respecting the force and situation of the enemy. Clouds of Hyder's cavalry hovered round our camp, and overspread the country on all sides, farther than the eye could reach; therefore it was not only impracticable to send out a reconnoitring party, but even a single scout could not escape detection. Several men were dispatched for intelligence, but none returned; and the British commander could procure no farther knowledge of the number and disposition of the enemy, than the short view from his own advanced posts admitted. Thus compelled to proceed in the dark, Coote could

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form no previous plan of action, but was obliged to trust entirely to his invention, which must instantaneously devise plans and expedients, according to the discoveries which he should make concerning the Mysoreans. Such are perhaps the most trying circumstances in which a general can be placed; they demand not merely courage, nor even the habitual skill of professional experience framing customary plans for common situations; extrication and success were to depend on genius, which must form and adapt its combinations to a new case, with a correspondent self-possession of faculties, and promptitude of execution. These qualities the fate of the Carnatic required in the commander to whom it was entrusted, and they were found in sir Eyre Coote.

Battle of Porto Novo.

On the 1st of July, at five in the morning, the British drums beat to arms; at seven, the troops, consisting of seventeen hundred Europeans, and three thousand five hundred sepoys, marched out of the camp in two lines; the first being commanded by sir Hector Monro, and the second by general Stuart. This body of five thousand two hundred, with a proportionable quantity of artillery; advanced to meet an enemy of seventy thousand, with a powerful train, directed by European officers. On the right was the sea; and on the left, numerous bodies of the enemy's cavalry as before precluded intelligence and observation. After an hour's march, our troops entered a plain, skirted by an eminence, on which the army of Hyder was posted, being flanked on both sides by strong batteries of artillery, and vigorously and skilfully fortified in front. The English general, from this position, saw that the success of his handful depended on the first impression; the design which he thence formed was to direct his efforts against a part, and cause a confusion which might extend to the rest of the army. With this view he narrowed his front, so

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arranged his men as to be nearly covered from the cannon of the enemy, and assailed their left wing diagonally: this prompt and happy movement decided the fortune of the day; attacked in such an unexpected manner, the Mysoreans were thrown into disorder. Hyder dexterously and speedily changed his front, in order to encounter the English with his whole force, and attempted at once to separate the British lines, and to surround them both. His dispositions for these purposes were masterly; but the respective efforts of Monro and Stuart, with the superintending conduct of Coote, proved invincible. The Mysoreans fought valiantly, but the British continuing to pursue the advantage which their first attack had produced, after an obstinate contest of seven hours, put the enemy completely to the route, and obtained a decisive victory. The battle of Porto Novo will ever be accounted an important epoch in the history of British India: it broke the spell which the defeat of colonel Baillie had formed, destroyed the awe that was attached to the name of Hyder Ally, and by its effects, both on the relative power and authority of the belligerent parties, may be considered as the salvation of India.* "So little," says the historian of the war in Asia, "can human sagacity penetrate into the maze of future events, that the repulse at Chillumbrum, which seemed pregnant with danger, by encouraging Hyder to venture an engagement, changed the whole face of our affairs in the Carnatic."

Able plan of attack by the British general.

Conduct and valour of the enemy.

Complete victory of the British.

Important effects.

Coote being soon reinforced by a body of troops from Bengal, reduced Passore, a place of considerable importance, and well-stored with provisions. Meanwhile Hyder, being joined by his son Tippoo with a fresh supply of troops, hazarded a second battle; but on the 27th of August, after displaying

Coote restores the British affairs in the Carnatic.

* See Thomson's War in Asia, p. 255—260.

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his usual skill and intrepidity, he was again defeated. Undismayed by these losses, he ventured a third engagement on the 27th of September, in which British prowess continued triumphant. He even afterwards manifested a wish for a fresh trial, but found his troops so disheartened as not to second his desire. He was now compelled to retreat into the interior country, to abandon the advantages of the former year, and to leave the English possessions in undoubted security. Such was the change effected by the ability and conduct of sir Eyre Coote in 1781. [p]

Admiral Hughes destroys Hyder's fleet,

and reduces the Dutch settlements on the Malabar coast.

MEANWHILE sir Edward Hughes by his naval efforts powerfully co-operated in annoying the enemies of England; he destroyed Hyder's shipping in his own ports, and thereby blasted in the bud his hopes of becoming a maritime power. Informed of the war with Holland, he immediately attacked the Dutch settlement of Negapatam, which was defended by five hundred Europeans, seven hundred Malays, four thousand five hundred sepoys, and two thousand three hundred of Hyder's troops. Admiral Hughes was in this expedition assisted by a land force under sir Hector Monro: their joint efforts reduced this place in three weeks, acquired a very considerable booty, and compelled Hyder to evacuate Tanjore. About the same time, the British factory in the island of Sumatra, with the assistance of captain Clements and a small squadron of ships, subdued all the Dutch settlements on the west coasts of the island.

Europe.—Plans of the house of Bourbon when reinforced by the Dutch.

IN Europe, the Bourbon princes, reinforced by the Dutch, formed a comprehensive plan of operations; they proposed to subdue Jersey, to attack our naval armaments on our own coast, to invade Minorca, and accomplish the reduction of Gibraltar. In January, the baron de Rullecourt invaded the

[p] Annual Register, 1781.

island

island of Jersey, and leaving a small garrison at Grouville, marched to St. Helier. Having besieged the avenues of the town, he surprised the guard in the dark, and possessed the market-place without noise; and at the break of day, the inhabitants were astonished to find themselves in the hands of the enemy. Major Corbet, deputy governor, with the magistrates and principal inhabitants, being brought prisoners to the court-house, the French commander wrote terms of capitulation, by which the island was to be surrendered to France, the troops to lay down their arms, and to be conveyed to England. The lieutenant-governor represented, that no act could have the smallest validity in his present situation, and that the officers and troops were too well informed of their duty to pay any regard to his acts while a prisoner; but his remonstrance was unavailing, Rullecourt was peremptory in his demand, and Corbet, under the impression of the moment, too precipitately signed the capitulation.[q] The French commander summoned Elizabeth castle to surrender on the prescribed terms; but this fortress was preserved by the conduct and fortitude of captains Aylward and Mulcaster, who having retired thither at the first alarm, prepared against a sudden attack, rejected the summons with great spirit, and peremptorily refused to pay the smallest regard to the capitulation, or to any orders which should be issued by the lieutenant-governor in his present circumstances. Meanwhile the alarm extended, and the nearest troops rushed with the utmost expedition towards the point of danger, and immediately formed on an eminence near the town, under the conduct of major Pierson of the ninety-fifth regiment. Rullecourt required the British commander immediately to yield; the gallant officer replied, that if the French leader and troops did not within

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The French invade the island of Jersey.

At first successful; but are finally repulsed.

[q] Annual Register, 1781.

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twenty minutes lay down their arms and surrender themselves prisoners of war, he should attack them the instant that period was expired. Pierson made a very masterly disposition of his forces, and when the specified time was elapsed, began the conflict with such an union of impetuosity and skill as soon gained a decisive victory. The French general being mortally wounded, the next in command seeing the hopelessness of their situation, requested the lieutenant-governor to resume his authority, and to accept of their surrender as prisoners of war. The satisfaction arising from this victory was greatly diminished by the fall of the hero to whom it was owing; fighting at the head of conquering troops, the gallant Pierson was killed in the twenty-fifth year of his age. The redoubt at Grouville was immediately attacked and retaken, and the whole of the French invading party was either killed or taken prisoners: thus ended the second attempt of France on the island of Jersey.

Blockade of Gibraltar.

THE blockade of Gibraltar continued, and notwithstanding the supply of provisions which had been brought by admiral Rodney in the preceding year, the garrison began to feel the distresses of restricted food: so early as October 1780, the governor had been obliged to deduct a quarter of a pound from each man's daily allowance of bread, and to confine the consumption of meat to a pound and a half a-week, which, from being so long kept, was now scarcely eatable. The inhabitants were reduced to still greater difficulties: after the supply which the English fleet had brought, and even earlier, not a single vessel arrived with provisions or necessaries, either from the neighbouring shores of Barbary, or any of the more distant coasts of Africa; so that, with every other misfortune, they were at once cut off from that great and long-established source of a cheap and plentiful market, and reduced to depend entirely for relief on the casual arrival of a few small Minorcan

Minorcan vessels, whose cargoes were insufficient, and prices immoderate.[r] To this distressing situation both the soldiers and inhabitants submitted, not only without murmur, but with universal cheerfulness. In such circumstances, the interest and honour of Britain required, that one of the first measures of the campaign should be the relief of Gibraltar; and early in spring, a great fleet, under the conduct of the admirals Darby, Digby, and sir J. Lockhart Ross, was fitted out for this service. The French and Spaniards boasted that they would defeat the execution of this design; thereby conceiving a vain hope of deterring Britain from the attempt. The English fleet consisted of twenty-eight sail of the line. A French armament of twenty-six ships was ready at Brest, while thirty Spanish ships were parading in the bay of Cadiz. France was much more intent on her own designs of overpowering the British in America and the West Indies, and co-operating with the native powers of the East, than on seconding the project of Spain against Gibraltar; instead of seeking a junction with the fleet of her allies, she sent her principal naval force, under count de Grasse, to the western world, and a strong squadron under Suffrein to the eastern. The British fleet left St. Helen's on the 13th of March,

[r] The following account, copied from the Annual Register of 1782, and with the usual accuracy of that valuable performance, clearly illustrates the distressed state of the garrison: — "Of the most common and indispensable necessaries of life; bad ship-biscuit, full of worms, was sold at a shilling a pound; flour and beef, in not much better condition, at the same price; old dried pease at a third more; the worst salt, half dirt, the sweepings of ships' bottoms and storehouses, at eight-pence; old Irish salt butter at half a crown; the worst sort of brown sugar brought the same price; and English farthing candles were sold at six-pence a piece.

"But fresh provisions bore still more exorbitant prices, even when the arrival of vessels from the Mediterranean opened a market: turkeys sold at three pounds twelve shillings a piece; sucking pigs at two guineas; ducks at half a guinea; and small hens sold at nine shillings a piece. A guinea was refused for a calf's pluck; and one pound seven shillings asked for an ox's head. To heighten every distress, the firing was so nearly exhausted as scarcely to afford a sufficiency for the most indispensable culinary purposes, so that all the linen of the town and garrison was washed in cold water, and worn without ironing. This want was severely felt in the wet season, which, notwithstanding the general warmth of the climate, is exceedingly cold at Gibraltar."

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and were obliged to delay some days on the coast of Ireland, waiting for victuallers from Cork. It had also under its convoy the East and West India fleets: having conducted these merchantmen beyond the reach of the enemy's fleets, admiral Darby steered for Gibraltar with his naval force, and ninety-seven victuallers. On the 12th of April he arrived off Cadiz, where he saw the Spanish fleet lying at anchor, and evidently disposed to afford him no opposition. The British admiral having sent forward the convoy under cover of a few men of war and frigates, cruized with his fleet off the streights, in hopes of enticing the enemy to hazard an engagement; but the Spanish armament remained in its former station. A vexatious, though not formidable enemy greatly annoyed the British fleet; during the siege several gun-boats, constructed at Algeziras on the western side of Gibraltar bay, by night crossed and fired on the town and garrison. When the convoy was in the bay, about twenty of these boats sallied, under the benefit of a calm, every morning from Algeziras, and with a fixed and steady aim regularly cannonaded and bombarded our ships; but as soon as the wind at its stated hour began to spring up, they immediately fled, and were pursued in vain. These efforts were merely troublesome, without effecting any material damage to the shipping, and the garrison was completely supplied. Enraged at this disappointment of her expectations to reduce Gibraltar by blockade, Spain redoubled her exertions for compassing her object by force. She raised the most stupendous works, and placed on them the most formidable artillery that had ever been employed in a siege: a hundred and seventy pieces of cannon, and eighty mortars, poured their fire upon Elliot's brave garrison. This dreadful cannonade and bombardment was continued night and day for many months, without intermission. Nothing, it was said, and may well be conceived,

The British fleet supplies the garrison with provision.

The Spanish resolve to attempt its reduction by storm.

Immense preparations for that purpose.

Constant cannonade and bombardment.

ceived, could be more terribly sublime than the view and report of this scene to those who observed them from the neighbouring hills of Barbary and Spain, during the night, especially in the beginning, when the cannonade of the enemy being returned with still superior power by general Elliot, the whole rock seemed to vomit out fire, and all distinction of parts were lost in flame and smoke. While the fleet continued in the bay, general Elliot retorted the enemy's attack with a prodigious shower of fire; but as it was a standing maxim with that experienced and wise commander, never to waste his ammunition, and as the great and evidently increasing difficulty of supply rendered this caution still more essentially necessary, he soon retrenched in that respect, and seemed to behold unconcerned the fury and violence of the enemy. It was calculated, that during three weeks the Spaniards expended fifty ton of powder each day: after that time, however, they relaxed their efforts, and were more sparing in the consumption of ammunition. The impression made on the garrison by these exertions was very disproportionate to the labour and expence of the enemy. The whole loss, from the 12th of April to the end of June, amounted to only one commissioned officer and fifty-two private men killed, and to seven officers and two hundred and fifty-three privates wounded. The damage of the works was too trifling to give any concern to the defenders, but the duty and fatigue were extremely great. The town suffered dreadful damage; the inhabitants consisted of various nations and religions; the English amounted only to five hundred, the Roman catholics to near two thousand, and the Jews were little short of nine hundred. Those who escaped destruction from the cannonade and bombardment embraced every opportunity of leaving so dangerous a situation, and removed either to England or to the neighbouring countries. However

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the Spaniards found they might destroy the lives and effects of individuals, they could not advance their object by all their operose labour, and therefore towards the close of the summer suspended their efforts.

General Elliot.

GENERAL Elliot meanwhile appeared to employ himself in strengthening his defences, while he was really meditating a terrible blow on the camp of the enemy. Having seen that the preparations of the Spaniards were arrived at the highest possible perfection, he conceived a project of frustrating all their mighty efforts, by attacking, storming, and destroying their works. He employed the greatest part of autumn in making the most complete arrangements for executing the whole and every part of this grand design. His object was to attack the fortifications on every side at the same instant: to effect this purpose, he distributed his various forces where the several parts could respectively be most efficient, and in such relative positions as rendered co-operation most easy, expeditious, and impressive. To fertility of invention, the genius of Elliot united a comprehensiveness of mind, which grasped objects in all their bearings and relations, cool and vigorous judgment, and nice discrimination; with the greatest exactness he adjusted his plan in all departments, and made provisions for every probable contingency. The time he fixed for his enterprise

Sally of Nov. 27th,

was a night during the darkness of winter. On the 27th of November, at three in the morning, the British force marched in the following order: the troops were divided into three columns; the centre was commanded by the Hanoverian lieutenant-colonel Dachenhausen, the column on the right by lieutenant-colonel Hugo of the same corps, and the body on the left by lieutenant-colonel Trig of the 12th regiment; the reserve was led by major Maxwell of the 73d; a party of seamen, in two divisions, was conducted by the lieutenants Campbell and Muckle

of

of the Brilliant and Porcupine royal frigates; and the whole body was headed by brigadier-general Ross. In each column there was an advanced corps, a body of pioneers, a party of artillery-men carrying combustibles, a sustaining corps, and a reserve in the rear. With such silence did they march, that the enemy had not the smallest suspicion of their approach, until an universal attack conveyed the tremendous intimation. The ardour of our troops was every where irresistible: the Spaniards, astonished, confounded, and dismayed, fled with the utmost precipitation, and abandoned those immense works of so much labour, time, and expence. The whole efforts of Spanish power and skill for two years, the chief object of their pride and exultation, were in two hours destroyed by British genius directing British intrepidity, ardour, and skill. The most wonderful exertions were made by the pioneers and artillery-men, who spread their fire with such astonishing rapidity, that in half an hour two mortar batteries of ten thirteen-inch mortars, the batteries of heavy cannon, with all the lines of approach, communication, and traverse, were in flames, and every thing subject to the action of fire was finally reduced to ashes. The mortars and cannon were spiked, and their beds, carriages, and platforms destroyed. The magazines blew up one after another in the course of the conflagration. Before day-break the British force, having completely executed their grand project, returned to the garrison.

entirely destroys the enemy's preparations.

Admiral Darby having, in vain, endeavoured to draw the Spanish fleet to an engagement, after relieving Gibraltar returned to protect the channel. Meanwhile monsieur de Guichen, understanding that the British fleet no longer intervened between Brest and Cadiz, sailed with eighteen ships of the line to join the Spanish fleet, and to support it in the invasion of Minorca; which, next to Gibraltar, was the principal European object of Spanish ambition.

Darby endeavours to bring the enemy's fleet to battle, but in vain.

They

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They set sail for Cadiz in the end of July, having ten thousand land forces on board; proceeding with these to the Mediterranean, they left them at Minorca, and returning to the Atlantic, directed their course to the English channel, with forty-nine ships of the line. Their reasons for taking this direction were various: they proposed to prevent succours from being sent to Minorca, and to intercept our homeward-bound fleets, which were expected at this time to return, and a large outward-bound convoy on the eve of sailing from Cork. So little had we foreseen or suspected their design, that the combined fleets had formed a line from Ushant to the Scilly islands, to bar the entrance into the channel, before it was known in England that they were arrived in the ocean. Admiral Darby, then in the channel, had almost fallen in with the enemy, with only twenty ships of the line, when the accidental meeting of a neutral vessel informed him of their situation and force. The British admiral returned to Torbay to wait for reinforcements, and instructions from the admiralty. His fleet was soon joined by so many ships as to amount to thirty sail of the line: he now received orders to put to sea for the protection of the homeward-bound merchantmen; but, as the enemy was so much superior, to avoid a close and decisive engagement, unless absolutely necessary for the preservation of the convoy. Meanwhile the French admiral proposed to attack the British fleet in its station at Torbay, but was overruled by his Spanish colleague. That commander represented the state both of the ships and men, of whom, especially the Spaniards, great numbers were sick, as depriving them really of that superiority which they possessed in appearance. They therefore directed their attention entirely to the interception of British merchandise. But very stormy weather obliged them to return, in the beginning of September, to Brest, where the French going into port,

The combined fleet of forty-nine ships of the line sails to the channel.

The British fleet of thirty ships of the line keeps the sea.

port, the Spaniards proceeded to their own coasts. Darby, after conducting the expected merchantmen into harbour, returned himself to Plymouth in November.

THE French refitted their fleet with the utmost expedition. Notwithstanding the lateness of the season, they proposed to reinforce count de Grasse with both troops and ships of war in the West, and to support him with stores; to reinforce and supply Suffrein in the East; and to rejoin the Spanish fleet, that they might prevent England from relieving Minorca. The several squadrons and convoys were ordered to sail together as far as their course lay in the same direction. The British admiral heard of this preparation and its objects, but without being accurately informed of its force, which amounted to nineteen ships of the line. They dispatched admiral Kempenfeldt with twelve ships of the line, one fifty gun ship, and four frigates, to intercept the French squadron and convoy. The British admiral descried the enemy on the 12th of December, when the fleet and convoy were dispersed by a hard gale of wind, and the latter considerably behind. He endeavoured to avail himself of this situation, by first cutting off the convoy, and afterwards fighting the fleet. For the intended service, admiral Kempenfeldt's number of frigates was much too small; notwithstanding this deficiency, however, twenty transports and store-ships were captured, containing eleven hundred land forces, seven hundred seamen, a great quantity of ordnance, arms, warlike stores, camp equipage, clothing, and provisions; many ships were also dispersed. The French admiral, meanwhile, endeavoured to collect his fleet, and form a line, but night came on before he could accomplish his purpose. Kempenfeldt, still ignorant of the force of the enemy, made preparations for fighting the next morning. At day-light, perceiving

Admiral Kempenfeldt intercepts a French convoy.

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ceiving them to leeward, he formed his line; but, on a nearer approach, discovering their strength, he thought it prudent to decline an engagement. The enemy did not appear so confident in their superior numbers as to urge the British to battle: both fleets therefore parted, as if by mutual consent. Valuable as was the capture atchieved by Kempenfeldt, yet great dissatisfaction was excited in England against the admiralty, for not furnishing that gallant commander with a force which might have seized the convoy, and vanquished the French fleet: there were ships, they said, lying idle in harbour, which ought to have been employed in this service.

War with Holland.

THE war with Holland required in Europe a considerable diversion of our naval force. The Dutch were fortunately very little prepared for hostilities, and extremely deficient in seamen and naval stores, in which they had heretofore so greatly abounded. The objects arising from war with them were, by cutting off their sources of naval supply from the north, to prevent the restoration of their marine, to destroy their immense commerce from those quarters, to protect our own, and to prevent their intercourse with our enemies in southern Europe. For these purposes a fleet was stationed in the North Seas, under admiral Hyde Parker. In the beginning of June, the Dutch endeavoured to prepare such a fleet as should protect their own Baltic trade, and intercept ours. On the 19th of July, admiral Zoutman sailed from the Texel, with eight ships of the line, ten very large frigates, and five sloops. Admiral Parker was now on his return from Elsineur, with a convoy under his protection; his squadron consisted of six ships of the line, of which two were in very bad condition, and several frigates.

Action off the Dogger Bank.

EARLY on the 5th of August, the fleets came in sight of each other off the Dogger Bank; Parker perceiving

perceiving the strength of the enemy, ordered his convoy to make the best of their way, and sent his frigates for their protection: the Dutch admiral having used the same precaution, prepared for battle, and both parties appeared eager for a close engagement. They advanced to meet each other in gloomy silence, without firing a gun until they were within pistol shot. The Dutch were superior both in number of ships and weight of metal; but the British admiral, notwithstanding this inferiority, made the battle a trial of force, rather than of skill. Indeed, both parties were so extremely eager to display national valour, as to supersede all dexterity of manœuvre. For three hours and forty minutes did they fight without intermission, ranged abreast of each other; the conflict was extremely bloody; of the English five hundred were killed or wounded, but the Dutch lost upwards of eleven hundred men. Though the enemy long kept the sea with astonishing firmness and intrepidity, yet the English were evidently superior; one of the best ships of the Dutch was sunk, and two more so much damaged as to be for ever unfit for service. Though the British ships were greatly shattered, yet none of them were hurt beyond the possibility of reparation. The Dutch convoy was scattered, and compelled to return home instead of pursuing its course. The voyage to the Baltic was of necessity abandoned, all means of procuring naval stores were cut off, and the immense carrying trade between the northern and southern nations of Europe, which, along with their fisheries, had been the great source of the Dutch power and wealth, was for this year annihilated. Though the result of the engagement, on the whole, proved favourable to England, and the valour displayed in the action was highly and generally approved, yet the admiralty was severely blamed for not furnishing admiral Parker with a sufficient force. There were as many ships idle, either at Chatham

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Chatham or in the Downs, as, if they had joined Parker, would have enabled him to bring the Dutch fleet and convoy into England. The admiral himself appears to have been by no means satisfied with the support which he had received: he resigned his command, and on that occasion did not conceal his sentiments. [a]

Expedition of Commodore Johnstone to the Cape of Good Hope;

COMMODORE Johnstone was appointed to command a squadron destined to annoy the Dutch in another quarter, by attacking the Cape of Good Hope, a settlement extremely valuable to the United Provinces; thence he was to proceed to the Spanish settlement of Buenos Ayres, in the Rio de la Plata of South America, where a dangerous insurrection had given great alarm to the court of Madrid. The Dutch, conscious of their inability to defend the Cape, applied for assistance to France. The court of Versailles being also deeply interested in preventing Britain from obtaining so important a possession, ordered Monsieur de Suffrein, in his way to India, to watch the motions of the British squadron. Commodore Johnstone's naval force consisted of a seventy-four, a sixty-four, and three fifty gun ships, besides several frigates, a bomb vessel, a fire-ship, and some sloops of war. The land force was composed of three new regiments, of a thousand men each: several outward-bound East Indiamen and store ordnance vessels went out with this convoy; and the whole fleet, including transports and armed ships, amounted to more than forty sail. With these commodore Johnstone stopped at Cape de Verd Islands, for water and fresh provisions: for collecting these supplies, a great part of the crews, apprehending no enemy to be near, were dispersed on shore. The French squadron, which consisted of five ships of the line, with a body of land forces, being informed of the

[a] See Annual Register, 1781.

situation

situation of the British, expected to take them by surprise. On the 16th of April, Suffrein leaving his convoy at a distance, attacked the British squadron in Port Praya, in the island of St. Jago. He advanced as if to certain victory, but was soon taught his mistake: the British force, though surprised, was so far from being intimidated, that they not only rallied, but entirely beat off the enemy, with great loss of men and damage to the shipping. Suffrein, disappointed in this attempt, made the best of his way to the Cape, where, by his junction with the Dutch garrison, he knew he should be able to defend it against Johnstone's armament. The British commodore, finding on his arrival that success would be impracticable, forbore the attempt. Soon after, meeting with five richly laden homeward-bound Dutch East Indiamen, he took four, and burnt the other: when, perceiving that he could not compass the original purpose of his expedition, he returned to England with his prizes.

he captures valuable prizes.

THE West Indies, after being the theatre of the hostilities which have been recently narrated, experienced a most terrible enemy in the warring elements. This was a hurricane, far exceeding in tremendous horror and dreadful destruction the usual convulsions of the torrid zone. On the 10th of October 1780, this engine of devastation commenced its fell movements in the Island of Barbadoes. Thunder and lightning, whirlwinds, earthquakes, torrents of rain, fire, air, earth, and water, appeared to vie with each other in rapidity of desolation. The first night, Bridgetown, the capital of the island, was levelled with the ground. Other towns, as well as villages and single houses, shared the same fate: plantations were destroyed, the produce of the earth was torn up, animals perished, and numbers of human beings fell either victims to the fury of the elements, or to the downfal of buildings.

West Indies.

Tremendous hurricane in the Leeward Islands;

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buildings.[t] The fear of a pestilence, from the multitude of dead bodies in so putrifying a climate, compelled the survivors instantaneously to bury the dead, without allowing to relations and friends the melancholy pleasure of a distinguishing attention to the objects of their affection. The negroes by rapine and violence added to the general calamity, and as they were much more numerous than the whites, might have utterly ruined the island, had not general Vaughan with a considerable body of troops been stationed upon it, and awed those barbarians to quietness and obedience. The prisons being involved in the common destruction, the late tenants of those mansions, who had been confined for violating the laws, joined in the outrages; but the prisoners of war, especially a party of Spaniards, acted with the greatest humanity and honour, in assisting the distressed inhabitants and preserving public order. The islands of St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent's, and Dominica, were also desolated. The French islands in the same quarter of the West Indies, especially Martinique and Guadaloupe, suffered no less than the English.[u] But a still more direful hurricane, on the 3d of October, wreaked its vengeance on Jamaica, and especially on the districts of Westmorland and Hanover, two of the most fertile spots in the island. The inhabitants of Savannah la Mar, a considerable trading town in that quarter, were beholding with astonishment such a swell of the sea as had never before been seen, when, on a sudden, the waters of the deep, bursting

in Jamaica.

[t] Annual Register, 1781.

[u] It is remarkable, that in the same month some parts of the country in the vicinity of London experienced a tornado very unusual in this northern climate. The storm burst on Hammersmith, Roehampton, Richmond, Kingston, and the environs. At Hammersmith it blew down a considerable part of the church, though very strongly built, and both there and at other places damaged a number of houses. The same day a much more violent tempest raged on the coast of Normandy.——See Chronicle in the Annual Register 1780, and Gentleman's Magazine for October in the same year.

through

through all bounds, overwhelmed the town, and swept man, beast, and habitation in one torrent of destruction. What the waters did not reach in the higher vicinity, combined tempest and earthquake finished. Besides present desolation, this dreadful scourge, by covering the most fertile tracts with sand and other barren substances, sterilised the ground, and rendered it unsusceptible of future culture. The loss of property was estimated at upwards of a million sterling in two parishes in Jamaica. Their neighbours endeavoured to alleviate the miseries of the sufferers; but their principal and most effectual relief they derived from the mother-country, in the generous benefactions of individuals, and the liberal munificence of the legislature.

Humane endeavours to alleviate the distresses.

ADMIRAL Rodney was fortunately at New York at this terrible season, and returned at the close of the year to the West Indies. Having concerted his plan of operation with general Vaughan, he, together with that commander, undertook an expedition for the recovery of St. Vincent's, in the expectation of finding its fortifications dismantled, and its garrison impaired by the recent hurricane. Having however reconnoitred, and finding both the works and garrison in such force as to require more time for reduction than its comparative value justified, he therefore desisted from the attempt. No sooner had Britain been compelled to go to war with Holland, than ministers, with a meritorious policy, projected to strike a blow, which should prove fatal to the commercial resources of her ungrateful enemy. The Dutch island of St. Eustatius, though itself a barren rock, had long been the seat of an immense and lucrative commerce: it was a general market and magazine to all nations; its largest gains were, during the seasons of war, among its neighbours, as it then derived from its neutrality unbounded freedom of trade. The property on a settlement so

The campaign opens.

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circumstanced was known to be extremely great: to the acquisition of such valuable spoils, therefore, government directed its views, and sent instructions to the commanders to make an attempt on the opulent repository. As the place was naturally strong, with the assistance of the French it might have been rendered able to withstand an attack. Our commanders, to anticipate reinforcements, and at the same time deceive the enemy, first pretended a design of assailing Martinico; but suddenly appearing before the island of St. Eustatius, they surrounded it with a great force. The admiral and general summoned the governor to surrender, with which demand that officer very prudently complied, and recommended the town and inhabitants to the known clemency of the British conquerors. The wealth found in this place was estimated on a moderate calculation at three millions sterling. Soon after, a convoy of Dutch merchantmen richly laden were captured by three of Rodney's ships, and the prizes estimated at about six hundred thousand pounds sterling. About this time, some enterprising adventurers from Bristol, with a squadron of privateers, sailed to Surinam, and under the guns of the Dutch forts brought away every valuable ship from the settlements of Demarara and Issequibo. Thus Holland, in the destruction of her commerce, was taught the folly of provoking to hostilities the most powerful maritime state of the universe.[x]

Capture of St. Eustatius.

THE court of Versailles formed the same project this campaign, which had been defeated in the preceding, to overpower the English force in the West Indies, and afterwards compel Britain to relinquish North America. There were already eight

x British merchants being proprietors of some parts of the property captured in the Dutch settlements, considerable disputes arose between them and the admiral on this subject. It is remarkable, that in one of the letters written on this occasion, Rodney prophesied that Demarara would in a few years very far surpass in value the expectations which were then entertained. This prediction, though then thought improbable, has been since amply verified.

ships

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ships of the line at St. Domingo and Martinico, with a considerable body of land forces. On the 22d of March, count de Grasse, with twenty sail of the line, one of fifty-four guns, and six thousand land forces, sailed for the West Indies, with an immense convoy, amounting to two hundred and fifty ships, and arrived off Martinico. In the end of April, sir George Rodney having detached three of his ships to escort the St. Eustatius booty to Britain under commodore Hotham, had only twenty-one ships of the line, while de Grasse, being reinforced from Martinico, had twenty-four. Rodney himself remaining with general Vaughan at St. Eustatius, sent sir Samuel Hood towards Martinico, in order to intercept de Grasse's fleet and convoy. On the 28th of April, admiral Hood was informed by his advanced cruisers, that the enemy were approaching in the channel between St. Lucia and Martinico. The next morning he descried the fleet before the convoy; and though he had only eighteen ships of the line to twenty-four, and the enemy had the wind in their favour, the British commander determined to hazard an engagement. With great skill and dexterity he endeavoured to gain the wind, and come to close battle. De Grasse, however, would not venture a decisive action, and from his windward position being enabled to preserve the distance which he chose, began to cannonade so far from the British ships as to admit of little execution on either side. During the first conflict, the British van, however, and the foremost ships of the centre, after repeated endeavours, at last succeeded in approaching nearer to the enemy, and having received a very heavy fire, were considerably damaged in their masts, hulls, and rigging, before the rest of our ships came up to their assistance. Finding his wounded ships in a very shattered condition, admiral Hood thought it prudent during the night to sail for Antigua. The marquis de Bouillé

De Grasse arrives in the West Indies.

Admiral Hood, detached by Rodney, offers battle to the French.

They do not venture a close engagement.

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attempted, in the absence of our fleet, to reduce St. Lucia on the 10th of May; but by the vigorous resistance of the garrison he was compelled to relinquish the design. Admiral Rodney now found it necessary, instead of spending more time at St. Eustatius, to employ his whole force against the French armament; he therefore immediately sailed to Antigua, and, as soon as the ships were repaired, proceeded towards Barbadoes.

A French armament invades Tobago.

On the very day that sir George Rodney with the fleets from Antigua arrived at Barbadoes, a small French squadron, with a considerable body of land forces, under the conduct of M. de Blanchelande, late governor of St. Vincent's, appeared off the island of Tobago. On the 23d of May, the day on which the enemy appeared, Mr. George Fergusson, the governor, sent the intelligence to Rodney, which the admiral received on the 26th. The naval commander imagined the force of the enemy much less considerable than it was, and on that supposition destined six sail of the line and some frigates, under admiral Drake, with about six hundred land forces, for its relief. That officer having arrived on the 30th off Tobago, descried between him and the land the enemy's fleet consisting of twenty-four sail of the line. Finding it impossible to attempt a landing, he retired, and sent the commander in chief intelligence of the posture of affairs. Meanwhile, about three thousand French troops landed on the island. The defenders, including a few soldiers and the colonial militia, amounted only to four hundred and twenty-seven whites; but they found most faithful and intrepid auxiliaries in their blacks. Governor Fergusson[y] himself was distinguished for his treatment of negroes, the joint result of judgment and humanity, by which he secured the obedience, while he conciliated the

Character and gallant defence of governor Fergusson.

[y] Brother to the colonel, who lived and died so honourably. — See this history, chap. xxv.

affection,

affection, and established the fidelity, of his labourers. His precept and example influencing other planters, rendered the condition of the blacks much more comfortable than in most of the other settlements, and attached to their masters, hearts very susceptible of kind impressions. The island, however, not being far advanced in cultivation, the number of negroes fit to bear arms was but small. The gallant Fergusson made a skilful and vigorous defence against an enemy four times the number of his brave band. Trusting that his message would bring effectual succour, he occupied a strong post, and for seven days prevented the enemy from making progress. The marquis de Bouillé, commander of the invaders, found all attempts to dislodge his opponents vain; wherefore, to reduce them to submission, he began to destroy their plantations. The islanders, seeing the approaching devastation of their property, were awed to concessions, which the fear of personal danger could not extort, and at last agreed to capitulate. The firmness of the governor restraining them from precipitate offers, procured honourable and advantageous terms. Admiral Rodney did not escape censure for not having adopted more effectual measures for the relief of Tobago; and it was asserted with some reason, that the French, without a great superiority of naval force, had in this campaign acquired a most important advantage in the West Indies. From the capture of Tobago in the beginning of June, to the beginning of August, de Grasse continued in the West Indies, without being encountered by Rodney; and in July sailed to St. Domingo, where, after being reinforced by five ships of the line, he escorted the rich mercantile convoy, with a fleet amounting to twenty-eight ships of the line. He conducted the convoy northwards until they were out of danger, and proceeded himself to the second object of his expedition. Rodney, conceiving that his health required an immediate

His judicious and kind treatment of his negroes;

overpowered by numbers, he yields to an honourable capitulation.

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return to his native country, escorted the West India convoy home, and sent the greater part of his fleet, under sir Samuel Hood, to watch the motions of de Grasse.

The Spaniards reduce West Florida.

WHILE these operations were carrying on between the French and British among the eastern settlements of the West Indies, the Spaniards were not inactive in the western. Elated with their successful attack against the British settlements on the Missisippi, they had extended their views to West Florida. In the year 1780, they had captured the fort of Bobille, on the confines of Florida; and in 1781, preparing a considerable armament from the Havannah, they resolved to besiege Pensacola. The enemy on their first departure were dispersed by a hurricane, but soon refitting, again set sail with eight thousand land forces, and fifteen ships of the line. On the 9th of March they arrived at Pensacola. Mr. Chester, governor of the province, and general Campbell, governor of the town, with a garrison not exceeding three thousand men including inhabitants, made the most skilful dispositions for the defence of the place. The enemy were near two months employed against Pensacola, before they were prepared for a general assault; and though they must ultimately, from the vast superiority of their numbers, have prevailed, yet the courage and activity of the garrison would have withstood their efforts much longer, had not their principal redoubt been accidentally blown up by the falling of a bomb at the door of the magazine, which set fire to the powder. The garrison now finding that farther defence was hopeless, next morning agreed to capitulate, being the 9th of May, exactly two months after the siege commenced; and thus the province of West Florida became a possession of Spain.

Last efforts of Britain for the re-

THE history now comes to the last exertions of Britain for the recovery of North America,—efforts glorious

glorious to the valour of her champions, but terminating in events melancholy to the national interests. Ministry had uniformly been remarkable, during the American war, for misapprehending situations and events, over-rating partial advantages, and conceiving them to be general and decisive. The reduction of Charlestown, and compulsory submission of South Carolina, they considered as certain indications of her future success, and of the desire of the colonists to return to their connection with the parent country. They received the exaggerations of deserters from America as authentic testimony, and gave to the effusions of disappointed pride and resentment, a belief due only to the impartial narratives of truth. The defection of Arnold elevated their hopes of recovering the colonies; they considered his manifesto describing both the weakness and discontent of the American army, as unquestionable evidence.[z] Proceeding on such superficial views

covery of North America.

Misinformation and false conclusions of ministers.

[z] The following extract from a letter written by a respectable field officer of the guards, dated New York, August the 24th, 1781, illustrates the opinion which was entertained by impartial observers on the spot, concerning the information and conduct of ministry, with prophetic sagacity predicts the event:——

"Well, here I am once more, wrapt up in military nonsense; for what but nonsense must be the science of *destroying mankind*, when taylors and shoe-makers start up generals, and dare to oppose us regularly bred practitioners: however, "*ex nihilo nihil fit*," and these self-created heroes have the less merit, as we have learnt to bear and forbear, and even turn the left cheek where the right has been smitten.

"Now, my good friend, I lament that it is not in my power to send you much consolation from here. The strange and unaccountable infatuation that attends our sagacious ministers at home, (who seem to embrace every phantom, merely that they may be deceived,) will indubitably assist others on this side of the Atlantic in bringing this rebellion to a most dishonourable conclusion. To enter into a particular detail of all our follies, &c. &c. would take up a volume; but I should wish to give you some idea of our present situation at New York.—When I left England it was confidently asserted by those who ought to have known better, 'that the rebel army was scarce existing; that the people in general was in a state of the utmost misery and despondency, their finances totally exhausted, without credit, without trade, or the means of procuring the common necessaries of life; and, at the same time, general inclination to submit to the mercy of Great Britain.'—This was the language on the 1st of last April: I own that was a day on which it is usual for the unwary passenger to be held up to ridicule by much greater fools than himself.

"With respect to the rebels:—At no period of time since the commencement of this infamous rebellion, have the Americans fitted out so many large ships as within these eight months: their success (thanks to our navy) has answered their most sanguine expectations. Their trade from Philadelphia to the Havannah and the West Indies has been very great, although it is in the power of two frigates to secure the entrance into the river Delaware. The success of the Spaniards at Pensacola was entirely

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views and feeble reasoning, they formed their expectations and plans. It was apprehended that general Clinton, from the supposed weakness and disaffection of Washington's army, would not only be able to afford that body full employment in the vicinity of New York, but also to co-operate powerfully with the southern force, overpower the Americans who were still refractory, and enable the well-affected (according to the ministerial hypothesis so often disproved by fact, the majority) to declare their sentiments, and assert their loyalty. On this theory the plan of the campagn was constructed: its principal and prominent object was, that lord Cornwallis should pervade the interjacent provinces, join Arnold, and in Virginia attack

Object and plan of the campaign, 1781.

entirely owing to the constant supplies of flour they received from the rebels, without which they could not have subsisted their army. With respect to the misery of the people, I leave you to judge how great it must be, when beef and mutton sell at the rate of two-pence a pound in the Jerseys, while we in New York pay two shillings; other things in proportion.—The depreciation of their paper money is now so far from being a loss to them, that it is a very great advantage, as, by the constant circulation of many hundred thousand *hard* dollars, which they have at length received, their paper currency will be annihilated, so that they are now beginning on a new bank. As to the despondency of the people, believe it not; for the spirit of rebellion never breathed with more rancour than it does at this moment in America. Perhaps the great successes of our forces to the southward have convinced you by this time that the Carolinians and Virginians are still unconquered.

"The French and rebel army, united under Washington, consists of near twelve thousand men, exclusive of militia, who are now called upon to join with the greatest force they can collect, in the most sacred promise of plunder of this city. The French fleet from the West Indies is expected in a very short time with reinforcement, and then we are to expect to be attacked here. As to the British army in these lines, small as it is, it is equal, beyond a doubt, to the annihilation of the Monsieurs and rebels under the great general Washington, if they would risque a battle, which we have no reason to suppose they would not do, as they continue to insult us so unpunished. The conduct of this war has been, and continues to be, most shameful and unpardonable; and neither justice nor common sense is permitted to have the smallest weight in the counsels of our great men. Public faith, once deemed inviolable, is daily sacrificed, and not the smallest attention is paid to any thing but plunder. The expenditure of public money is notoriously committed to the most mean and dishonest of men. There is not a paltry clerk in one of our departments, who cannot, in the space of a twelvemonth, afford to keep his town and country house, carriage, &c. &c. and realise thousands. Facts must speak for themselves, and I hope they will be required. It is impossible, in short, to suppose affairs can go as they should do, when merit is *discouraged*, infamy *rewarded*, and the name of an *honest* man a sufficient bar to his advancement. I am heartily sick of it all; I wish to return in peace and quietness to Old England.

"I say nothing of myself, but that I am, thank God, in good health, determined to *do my duty* in all situations to the best of my abilities; and let what happen, never to *sign a convention* with *rebels*.

the

the marquis de la Fayette, an active partisan of the republicans; while sir Henry Clinton should in the north oppose general Washington, and count Rochambeau, commander of the French troops. Early in the year 1781, lord Cornwallis, taking the field, advanced to the frontiers of Carolina. Tarleton having been ordered to scour the country to the left, pursued Morgan the American partisan; that officer retired to the Broad River, intending to cross it with his troops; but he found that from a sudden thaw the waters were so high as to render it impassable, unless with great danger: being so situated, and closely pressed by Tarleton, he resolved to hazard a battle. On the 18th of January, at eight in the morning, Tarleton came in sight of the enemy; they were drawn up on the edge of an open wood without defences, and though their numbers might have been somewhat superior to his own, the quality of his troops was so different as not to admit a doubt of success, which was still farther confirmed by his great strength of cavalry, so that every thing seemed to indicate a complete victory. His first line consisted of the seventh regiment, the foot and light infantry of his legion; the second of the first battalion of the seventy-first, while troops of cavalry flanked each line. Morgan placed seven hundred militia in one line on the edge of the wood; the second consisted of regular troops, on which he had much dependence: these he disposed out of sight in the wood. The British troops soon broke the enemy's line, and concluding the victory to be gained, were pursuing the fugitives, when, on a sudden, the second line of the enemy, which opened to the right and left to entice the pursuers, poured in a close and deadly fire on both sides. The ground was in an instant covered with the killed and wounded; and those brave troops, who had been so long inured to conquest, by this severe and unexpected check, were thrown into irremediable

Lord Cornwallis begins his march.

Expedition of the light troops.

Defeat of the gallant and enterprising Tarleton.

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irremediable disorder, and a total defeat was the immediate consequence; the loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners, exceeded four hundred men. Tarleton used every effort that ingenuity could devise to rally his men, and repulse the American horse, but his abilities and courage could not recover the fallen fortune of the day. The loss of Tarleton's corps, so soon after the disaster at King's Mountain, was severely felt by lord Cornwallis, to whom, on such a service, and in such a country, light troops were of the highest importance. The American general, Green, who had been appointed to watch the motions of lord Cornwallis, was stationed with a considerable force in North Carolina. The British general proposed to cut off the enemy's communication with Virginia, and at the same time to strengthen South Carolina, so that it might not be endangered in his absence: for this purpose he left a considerable body of forces at Charlestown, under lord Rawdon. Lord Cornwallis first made an attempt to intercept Morgan, which the dexterity of that partisan eluded. The British army with much difficulty passed the Catawba, and being informed that general Green was posted at Guildford, lord Cornwallis marched towards that place. Green's force consisted of about six thousand men, while the British did not exceed two thousand; therefore the American general determined to hazard a battle. The enemy were drawn up in the field, with a wood on the right, and other woods both in front and rear; consequently the safest point of attack was on the left wing. At the same time the general was obliged to act with great caution, lest he should fall into an ambuscade from the woods, as Tarleton had done in a similar situation. Major-general Leslie commanded the right wing, colonel Webster the left, Tarleton the cavalry, and his lordship himself the centre. A party of light infantry was stationed in the woods to act as occasion

Disadvantage to the British from this disaster.

Battle of Guildford.

sion might require. The enemy's first line was soon broken; the second made a very vigorous and gallant resistance, but were at length beaten back to the third line, which was stationed in the woods: there the battle became necessarily irregular; the Americans, being more accustomed to such a scene of combat, appeared for a short time likely to prevail; but the grenadiers of the seventy-first regiment, having by a rapid movement passed over a deep ravine, charged with such impetuosity as to break the enemy's line: the confusion terminated in a total rout. The loss on the side of the British amounted to five hundred men killed and wounded; among those who died of wounds was colonel Webster, an officer very highly esteemed by the general [a] and the whole army for courage, military skill, and ability. The loss of the Americans was considerably greater; but, when compared with their immediate resources, perhaps less in proportion than the loss of the conquerors. From Guildford the British army marched through a wild, inhospitable, and hostile country, and after encountering the severest hardships, arrived on the 7th of April at Wilmington in Virginia. Arnold, meanwhile, made an incursion into the northern parts of Virginia, and plundered the coast. Being soon reinforced by general Phillips, they made great havock among the enemy, and were not without hopes of effecting a junction with lord Cornwallis.

Cornwallis successful, but with considerable loss.

GENERAL Green, after his defeat at Guildford, spent some time in collecting reinforcements, which having arrived, he marched to South Carolina, to cut off the communication between lords Cornwallis and Rawdon. The British force in South Carolina was so small, that their situation was extremely precarious; and their provisions were so much re-

Campaign of lord Rawdon.

[a] Lord Cornwallis announced the death of this valiant officer to his father, the late Dr. Webster of Edinburgh, in a letter, which was published in the newspapers, and universally admired.

duced.

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duced, that their noble general was compelled to decline the proffered assistance of a body of loyalists, from absolute inability to afford them maintenance. Lord Rawdon was posted at Camden when Green arrived: his lordship learned that considerable reinforcements were expected by the American army; small as his own force was, our general formed a resolution at once bold and wise, to attack the enemy, numerous as they were, before they should be still more powerfully recruited. The Americans were encamped at two miles distance on the brow of a rocky steep [b], known by the name of Hobkirk Hill, flanked on the left by a deep swamp, and less fortified on that side, because there they apprehended no danger. Superior genius here acted on the same principle which in this history we have repeatedly seen successful, but especially in seeking and seizing the heights of Abraham.[c] The commander attempted the most difficult approach, from the well-founded presumption that there defence would be the least vigilant. At ten in the morning of the 25th of April, the British troops marched to the enemy round this swamp undiscovered, and entered a wood bordering upon the enemy's left wing. Hence they rushed with such rapid impetuosity as to throw that division of the enemy into an instant confusion, which communicated to the main body. The Americans, however, far superior in number, were enabled to rally, and make a resolute stand: their artillery arriving at this moment, afforded them powerful support, and greatly annoyed the British force. The provincials extended their front to such a length, that lord Rawdon apprehended the intention of surrounding his troops. At this instant he conceived one of those happy designs which the emergencies of war call forth from combined heroism and ability; he ordered his columns to form one

Battle of Hobkirk Hill.

[b] See Andrews, vol. iv.; Stedman, vol. ii.; and Ramsay.

[c] Vol. i. c. 1.

line.

line. Thin as this rank was, they charged the enemy with such fury, as proved totally irresistible, routed them, and obtained a complete victory. Whether we consider the design or execution, no action occurred during the war which displayed in a greater degree the united talents, valour, and ready invention which constitute the soldier and the general; but little availed military excellence, when seconded by political weakness; the reinforcements intended by ministers to join lord Rawdon, were not sent in proper time. By the late conflict his small band was reduced to eight hundred men, while the Americans, though defeated, were fast recruiting; our valiant commander was thus arrested in the career of victory, and obliged to act on the defensive until fresh troops should arrive. At length, part of the expected reinforcement arrived at Charlestown, and the British general marched downwards to effect a junction. In his absence, Green invested the strong post of Ninety-six, and at the same time sent a detachment to besiege Augusta in Georgia. Apprehensive that lord Rawdon would speedily return, Green attempted to take the fort by assault, but the garrison made so vigorous a defence that the Americans were compelled to retire. The day after their retreat the British general arrived: he soon learned that Augusta was taken, and that the besiegers had rejoined the army of Green. The force of the Americans was now so powerful, that great numbers of the provincials, who had professed obedience to Britain, threw off the mask; and avowed hostility. Finding every thing around him full of danger and enmity, the general perceived the necessity of abandoning Ninety-six, that he might converge his force for the defence of the lower province, and especially the capital. On his march he heard that a detachment of Americans was posted at Congaree Creek, and immediately hastened to that spot. The enemy, by breaking down

The Americans besiege Ninety-six;

but, on the approach of lord Rawdon, abandon the attempt.

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down a bridge, endeavoured to impede the progress of the British; but Rawdon advanced with surprising quickness, a party of his troops waded through the river, drove the enemy from the bank, and cleared a passage for the rest of the army. Lord Rawdon made repeated attempts to bring Green to battle; but, taught by experience, the wary American skilfully and successfully avoided an encounter.

NOTWITHSTANDING the enterprise, skill, and genius, so conspicuously displayed by the brave young Rawdon, Green on the whole succeeded so far as to recover the greater part of Georgia, and the two Carolinas; and had also entirely cut off communication between the British commanders in South Carolina and Virginia. Lord Rawdon having soon after returned to England, the command in South Carolina devolved on colonel Stewart. Green having both reinforced his army in numbers, and improved them in discipline, resolved to attack the British forces. On the 8th of September, he put his design in execution, and attacked colonel Stewart at the Eutaws. Great numbers were killed on both sides, without any decisive event; the result, however, was on the whole favourable to the enemy, and the British thenceforward confined their operations to the vicinity of Charlestown.

Cornwallis enters Virginia.

CORNWALLIS meanwhile entered Virginia, and made considerable progress near its southern coast. On the 25th of May he joined the body that had been commanded by general Phillips; and in the latter end of June, reached Williamsburgh. His lordship considered it of the highest consequence to command a post on a navigable river, as thus maritime assistance might co-operate with his land forces. He accordingly established himself at Gloucester and at York-town, on the opposite banks of York river. The marquis de la Fayette, together with the American general Wayne, were stationed with a powerful body of troops to watch the motions of

reaches Williamsburgh, and establishes himself at Gloucester.

lord Cornwallis, and without hazarding an engagement, to restrain their operations. Having fortified this position, and taken a general view of the situation of affairs, he formed an opinion that a much greater force than that which he possessed would be necessary for reducing Virginia, and effecting the object of the campaign. He conceived that there could be no hopes of ultimate and decisive success, without very active co-operation on the part of the commander in chief.

Sir Henry Clinton appears not to have coincided in the judgment of the other general: instead of reinforcing the army in Virginia, he turned his attention solely to the defence of New York, against which he apprehended an attack from the combined armies. To confirm him in this apprehension, the genius of Washington devised a stratagem, which easily imposed on the very moderate sagacity with which the British commander in chief was gifted. General Clinton had intercepted many of the American letters in the course of his command, and published them in the New York papers. Washington now wrote letters to various officers, declaring that the only effectual mode of saving Virginia was by attacking New York, in conjunction with the French troops; which, he asserted, would be soon attempted; for he was much alarmed at the success of a general, whom from experience he knew to be so fertile in resources, so vigorous in decision, and so prompt and expeditious in improving every advantage. These were (according to the writer's intention) also intercepted, and completely imposed on the British commander in chief. To continue the deception, the two commanders, accompanied by the principal officers of both armies, and attended by the engineers, reconnoitred the island of New York closely on both sides from the opposite shore; and to render appearances the more serious, took plans of all the works under the fire of their

Dexterous stratagem of Washington, which overreaches Clinton.

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batteries. The arrival of de Grasse was daily expected by the combined generals, and they resolved to proceed by forced marches to Virginia, not doubting that the mass of land and sea forces which would then be united, would overwhelm lord Cornwallis, when unassisted by the commander in chief. On the 19th of August they set out, and Clinton considered their departure as only a feint to cover their designs on New York: they proceeded to Virginia, and joined the army of la Fayette. De Grasse having arrived at the same time, blocked up York river with his ships, while his land forces effected a junction with the Americans. Intelligence had been dispatched by sir George Rodney to admiral Graves, that the French fleet was destined for the Chesapeak, and that sir Samuel Hood was on his way to the same place, in expectation of meeting with admiral Graves and the New York squadron. The dispatches having been unfortunately captured, did not reach the admiral. Sir Samuel Hood having arrived off the Chesapeak on the 25th of August, three days before, and being disappointed in his hopes of finding Graves there, proceeded to New York, which he reached on the 28th, and three days after the united squadrons sailed for the Chesapeak, and arrived the fifth of September, with nineteen ships of the line, when they discovered the French fleet at anchor there, amounting to twenty-four ships of the line. A partial engagement took place, in which several British ships were considerably damaged, but without any decisive event on either side. The hostile armaments kept five successive days in sight of each other, but stormy weather having much increased the damage of the British fleet, they returned to New York to refit. Meanwhile Barras, who had succeeded Terney in commanding the French naval force on the North American station, joined de Grasse; and thus the gallant army under the brave Cornwallis was inclosed and surrounded

Washington joins the forces in Virginia.

A French fleet blocks up the river.

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surrounded by an immense naval force, and an army of twenty-one thousand men, whilst his own corps did not exceed six thousand. Not conceiving it possible that sir Henry Clinton would be so completely outwitted, lord Cornwallis expected speedy succours, and made dispositions for a vigorous defence until they should arrive; meanwhile he found it necessary to contract his posts, and concentrate his defences; and the enemy immediately occupied those positions which the British general had abandoned. The trenches were opened by both armies in the night between the 6th and 7th of October; the batteries were covered with little less than one hundred pieces of heavy ordnance, and their attacks were carried on with formidable energy. In a few days most of the British guns were silenced, and the defence rendered hopeless. An express, however, having arrived from New York, and informed the commander that he might rely on immediate succours, the general persevered in resistance. Two redoubts on the left of the British greatly impeded the progress of the siege. The second parallel of the enemy being now finished, they resolved to open their batteries on these works on the fourteenth of October. The British forces employed every effort to defend the fortifications, but were overborne by the immense superiority of number. The noble commander saw that it would be impossible to withstand a general assault, for which the enemy was now prepared. Finding no succours likely to arrive, and himself surrounded on every side, he conceived a design of forcing his way through a part of the enemy, and making his escape, but found it would be impracticable. Thus hemmed in by a very superior army, through no rashness of his own, but in the skilful and vigorous execution of his part of a concerted plan, this brave leader had no alternative but the sacrifice of his gallant army without answering any purpose, or a surrender. On the latter

Lord Cornwallis is surrounded.

Expecting succours soon, he resolves to defend himself to the last.

Skilful and gallant defence.

Finding himself unable to resist, surrenders on honourable terms.

step

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step he at last resolved, and on the 19th of October yielded by an honourable capitulation.

At last sir Henry Clinton set out from New York to attempt the relief of lord Cornwallis, two months after the departure of Washington and Rochambeau had left him at liberty to proceed to the assistance of the distressed army. He brought with him seven thousand land forces, with a fleet, which was now reinforced by admiral Digby, consisting of twenty-five ships of the line. Having arrived off the late scene of hostilities, they found that all was over, and that succours so tardily accorded were equivalent to desertion. The French fleet, though still superior to the British, having accomplished their purpose, cautiously avoided any conflict; and the British commanders having no longer any inducement to remain upon that station, returned to New York.

Such was the fate of the gallant southern army and its valiant commander, from whose antecedent and recent successes sanguine hopes were entertained that the most valuable of the colonies would be recovered, and that the cause of Britain would ultimately prevail. In his laborious marches through the wild and intricate tracts, his lordship received the fullest and most experimental assurances that the people who were asserted by ministry or their adherents to be friendly, were generally hostile; that every attempt to recover America through the Americans themselves, was chimerical, as much as every idea of reducing it by force. The plan he saw had been concerted upon false principles, and he himself had fatally learned that though he and his heroic band had done their utmost, there was almost an equal deficiency of support and co-operation for its execution. The surrender at York-town was the concluding scene of offensive war with America. All the profuse expenditure of British wealth, all the mighty efforts of British power,

power, all the splendid atchievements of British valour, directed and guided by British talents and skill, proved without effect; the momentous exertions of a war so wasteful of blood and treasure were for ever lost. CHAP. XXVII. 1781.

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Dissatisfaction again prevails in Britain—enhanced by the news from Virginia.—Out of parliament, a majority becomes inimical to the American war and to ministers.—Meeting of Parliament—the king's speech—opposition inveigh with increased energy against ministers—dexterous defence by lord North—preliminary motions against ministers before the recess—manifest difference among opposition on American independence.—General plan of attack against administration now formed and matured—the various parts assigned, while Fox animates the whole.—Fox's proposed inquiry into the management of the navy—negatived by a small majority.—Conway's motion for an address to the king to conclude the American war—carried by a majority of nineteen.—Ministers still hold their places.—Lord John Cavendish's motion for the removal of ministers—the minister skilfully addresses himself to different sentiments and opinions—carries a motion for an adjournment—a coalition attempted in vain—the motion repeated by lord Surry.—Administration resigns.—Character of the North administration.—The duke of Richmond's strictures on the execution of colonel Haines—acknowledges he had been misinformed, and makes a satisfactory explanation.—Strictures on the promotion of lord George Germaine to the peerage.—New administration.—The marquis of Rockingham first lord of the Treasury—Mr. Fox and lord Shelburne secretaries of state.—Avowed plan of ministers.—Adjustment with Ireland.—Independence of the Irish parliament acknowledged.—Mr. Grattan's address.—Satisfaction of the Irish nation.—Supplies.—Parts of Mr. Burke's scheme adopted.—Conduct of Mr. William Pitt—connects himself with no party—reckons a chief advantage in our constitution the equipoise of the orders—projects a reform in parliament—proposes a committee to inquire into the state of representation—proposition not considered as a party question.—The younger members the votaries of reform—the older are for adhering to the existing constitution—arguments for and against—the supporters of reform outvoted.—Overtures

—Overtures of Mr. Fox for peace with the Dutch.—Premature endeavours to pacify America.—Death of the marquis of Rockingham.—Lord Shelburne made prime minister—enraged at this appointment, Mr. Fox resigns.—Mr. William Pitt chancellor of the exchequer.—Mr. Fox gives a general account of the reasons of his resignation.—India affairs.—Reports of the committees represent the general system of government to be erroneous and hurtful, and state gross abuses to have been committed by the company's chief servants.—Warren Hastings implicated in the censure.—Exertions of Mr. Dundas.—Bill of pains and penalties against governor Rumbold and his coadjutors.—Session rises.

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DURING the recess of parliament 1781, dissatisfaction had begun again to prevail, from incidents and events already mentioned, and especially from repeated instances of alleged misconduct in the ministerial direction of the navy. That source of dissatisfaction being opened, speedily caused others to issue: the immense expenditure, the profuse loans, the enormous increase of taxes, the little avail of all our exertions, presented themselves to the view, and the public were very differently disposed towards ministers, on the approach of the second session of parliament, from what they had been at the beginning of the first. Both dejected and dissatisfied, their gloom and displeasure were dreadfully aggravated by the melancholy news from Virginia. Judging of ministry under the immediate impression of this calamitous event, they hastily imputed our misfortunes to a series of folly, obstinacy, and misconduct. Many who had strenuously recommended perseverance in coërcion, now reprobated that system which they had most loudly applauded: a majority out of parliament became inimical to the American war and the present ministers; such was the disposition becoming prevalent, when parliament met on the 27th of November.

Dissatisfaction again prevails in Britain;

enhanced by the news from Virginia.

A majority out of parliament becomes hostile to ministers.

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Meeting of parliament, and the king's speech.

His majesty's speech somewhat exceeding the usual length in copiousness of detail, imputed the continuance of the war to the restless ambition of his enemies. He should not discharge the trust committed to the sovereign of a free people, or requite the constant and zealous attachment of his subjects to his person, family, and government, if to his own desire of peace, or to their temporary ease and relief, he sacrificed their essential rights and permanent interests. Having mentioned the favourable affairs in the East Indies, he recommended farther inquiries into the condition of the dominions and revenues of that country. His majesty stated to the house, without palliation or diminution, the unfortunate event of the campaign in Virginia, but adduced it as a ground for a firm confidence in parliament, and more vigorous, animated, and united exertions. The consequent address excited a very interesting debate, in which opposition sketched the principal topics of the charges which they adduced against ministers in the course of the session, and of the counsels which they proposed to be substituted. Their arguments were directed to prove the original folly of the American war; the madness of perseverance in so hopeless a contest; the incapacity, negligence, and mismanagement of the first lord of the admiralty; the ignorance, weakness, and incompetence of administration in their various departments, as well as general system; and the necessity of changing both men and measures. Lord North defended himself and his colleagues, both as to particular counsels and the series of policy, with a dexterity and ingenuity that, if it did not convince impartial readers or hearers, at least impressed them with a high opinion of the speaker's ability.

Opposition inveigh with increased energy against ministers.

Dexterous defence of lord North.

On the 4th of December, Mr. Burke proposed an inquiry into the conduct of the captors of St. Eustatius; a confiscation of effects, he alleged, there

there took place contrary to national justice and to national policy. To prove his first head, he entered into a very learned and able discussion of the extent of powers acquired by conquerors over an enemy surrendering at discretion; and for this purpose quoted the authority of the most celebrated writers on the law of nations, traced the history of these laws, and their actual state, as elucidated by the concurrent practice of all civilized societies. The feelings of mankind had even exceeded the theories of jurisprudence in mitigating the calamities of war: hence he inferred the necessity, in the present improved state of that code, of interpreting the maxims of law, even in the most mild and favourable sense. He therefore contended, that from the moment of submission, the vanquished parties were entitled to the security of subjects. Having laid down this proposition, he proceeded to a detail of the alleged enormities which he contended to be contrary to every dictate of justice and humanity, and offered to prove his allegations by testimony. Such cruelty and depredation, by exciting the hatred and enmity of neutral states, were no less impolitic than unjust. Admiral Rodney, without controverting Mr. Burke's general principle, totally denied his statement of the case: the Dutch were at war with us, therefore it was perfectly fair and consistent with the law of nations, that their property captured without a capitulation should be confiscated: he had seized the whole, not for himself and the other captors, but for the crown; he could have no mercenary views, as he did not till long after receive intelligence of the king's intention to bestow the booty on the fleet and army. He knew of no outrage, and never had heard that any was committed by the conquerors. The charge being unsupported by facts and documents, Mr. Burke's motion was negatived.

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On the 12th of December, the day appointed for considering the army supplies, a motion was brought forward

Preliminary motions against ministers.

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forward by sir James Lowther concerning the American war, apparently intended to sound the dispositions of the house, and preparatory to more pointed propositions. It was proposed to declare, that the war in North America had been hitherto ineffectual to the purposes for which it was undertaken; and that perseverance in it would be unavailing, and also injurious to the country, by weakening her power to resist her antient and confederated enemies. On this subject, so often discussed in such a variety of forms, there could be little novelty of argument. But opposition, in the division, ascertained the point which they were most anxious to establish: the minority, amounting to one hundred and seventy-nine to two hundred and twenty, shewed that ministers were losing ground. In the course of the discussions which American affairs underwent before the recess, the difference between lord Shelburne's connexions and the Rockingham party, concerning the independence, became more manifest than on any former occasion. Great contests also prevailed in the cabinet, respecting the plan of policy to be adopted in the present emergency. Some of the ministers proposed the total evacuation of America, and the direction of our whole force against the house of Bourbon; but the majority still cast a longing lingering look after the object which they had pursued for so many years. The most sanguine saw now, that all hopes of reducing the whole of the colonies were for ever vanished, but they still fondly fancied that they might preserve a part; and it was therefore determined, that a considerable force should be left at New York.

before the recess.

Difference of opinion among opposition on American independence.

Plan of general attack against administration.

DURING the recess, the opponents of ministry were employed in forming and maturing a plan of general attack against administration. The chief conduct was entrusted to Mr. Fox; and the various parts assigned to other senators, were to be directed and supported by this illustrious leader, so admirably fitted

fitted for the warfare which he now undertook. Indeed, though it would be difficult to determine in what mode such transcendent powers COULD be most effectually exerted; it is certain, as an historical fact, that the force and splendour of Mr. Fox's genius *have been* most frequently displayed, not in legislative invention or plans of executory policy, but in reprehensive eloquence; not in devising systems and measures for the wise and beneficial government of the country; but in contending that others have planned and acted unwisely and injuriously. On the 23d of January, the day after the Christmas adjournment expired, Mr. Fox moved an inquiry into the causes of the want of success of his majesty's naval forces during the war, and more particularly in the year 1781. For this purpose, he proposed a committee; which being agreed to by ministers, he, a fortnight after, on the 7th of February, discussed the subject. He traced the naval history from the beginning of the war, and exhibited a summary of the alleged miscarriages of the successive years. In surveying the events of 1780, he, with peculiar energy, exposed the infatuation which sent captain Moutray, with the East and West India fleets, so near the enemy's coasts. Having reached 1781, he stated five distinct charges of misconduct in the naval department: 1st, De Grasse was suffered to depart for the West Indies, without any effort to intercept his fleet. He had sailed from Brest on the 22d of March, with twenty-five ships of the line; Darby was at sea on the 13th, but instead of being suffered to pursue the enemy, he had been sent out of the way to Ireland. The second charge was, the loss of the St. Eustatius convoy, which had been captured on its way home; this might have been easily saved by sending a squadron at the time they were expected. The third was a letter sent to the mayor of Bristol from the admiralty, in answer to one from that gentleman, requesting information concerning

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concerning the combined fleets; the admiralty had misinformed and misled the Bristol merchants, by intimating that the hostile armament was not in the channel, when they knew that it was there, and had thereby endangered the trading ships of that city. The fourth charge was on the force sent to cope with the Dutch; and the fifth, the inadequate fleet sent out with admiral Kempenfeldt. The general defence adduced by lord Mulgrave, in favour of earl Sandwich, was, that he had acted according to information, moral probability, and the existing circumstances. Mr. Fox made a motion, founded on his five charges, that it is the opinion of this committee, that there has been gross mismanagement in the administration of the naval affairs of Great Britain during the course of the year 1781. The question being called for, Mr. Fox's motion was negatived by a majority of only two hundred and five to one hundred eighty-three. Encouraged by the progressive declension of ministerial majorities, on the 22d of February, opposition, in a motion made by general Conway, proposed to address the king, to put an end to the American war. After both sides had repeated arguments so often employed, the country gentlemen now leaving ministers, Conway's motion was negatived by a majority of only one, being one hundred and ninety-four to one hundred and ninety-three; and opposition cherished hopes of speedy success. Fully confident of victory, Conway, on the 27th of February, proposed the same motion under a different form. The usual arguments being repeated, opposition carried their motion by a majority of two hundred and thirty-four to two hundred and fifteen; and thus, after a contest of eight years, Mr. Fox and his party succeeded in their attempt to procure a vote from the house, for requesting the king to conclude the American war.

Is negatived by a small majority.

Conway's motion for an address to the king to put an end to the American war carried.

THE following motion was accordingly carried: "Resolved, February 27th, in the house of commons,

mons, That an humble address be presented to his majesty, most humbly to represent to his majesty, that the farther prosecution of offensive war on the continent of North America, for the purpose of reducing the revolted colonies to obedience by force, will be the means of weakening the efforts of this country against her European enemies; tends, under the present circumstances, dangerously to increase the mutual enmity, so fatal to the interests both of Great Britain and America; and by preventing an happy reconciliation with that country, to frustrate the earnest desire, graciously expressed by his majesty, to restore the blessings of public tranquillity." To this address his majesty returned the following answer: "Gentlemen of the house of commons, There are no objects nearer to my heart, than the ease, happiness, and prosperity of my people. You may be assured, that, in pursuance to your advice, I shall take such measures as shall appear to me to be most conducive to the restoration of harmony between Great Britain and the revolted colonies, so essential to the prosperity of both; and that my efforts shall be directed in the most effectual manner against our European enemies, till such peace can be obtained as shall consist with the interests and permanent welfare of my kingdom."

Ministers still hold their places.

MINISTERS had often declared, that they would hold their places no longer than a parliamentary majority should sanction their system and measures; it was therefore expected that a resignation would immediately ensue. Lord North and his colleagues, however, continued to hold their places, because they said it did not appear, by any vote or resolution, that parliament had withdrawn its confidence from the present administration: confiding in its increasing strength, the opposite party resolved to bring this question to immediate issue. Accordingly, lord John Cavendish, on the 8th of March, proposed resolutions to the following effect: that, from 1775, the

Lord John Cavendish's motion for the removal of ministers.

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the nation had expended upwards of one hundred millions in a fruitless war: during which we had lost thirteen colonies, many of our valuable West India and other islands; that the rest were in imminent danger; that we were now engaged in an expensive war with America, France, Spain, and Holland, without a single ally; that the chief cause of these accumulated misfortunes was the united incapacity and misconduct of administration. The three first of these resolutions could not but be admitted as matters of fact: respecting the fourth, which was an inference from the others, Mr. Fox contended, that a long uniform series of calamity and disgrace was a sufficient proof of misconduct; and farther, that weakness and folly distinctly marked each separate measure of every minister, as they collectively pervaded the whole system of administration. Lord North argued, that it was unfair from misfortune to infer misconduct; but that even if misconduct existed, it might be in the execution, instead of the plans. The minister, however, was aware, that a direct and pointed answer to the charges could be of little avail; therefore, with his usual dexterous ingenuity, he shifted his ground. To draw the attention of the house from the conduct of ministers, the question at issue, he called on them to consider, if the present counsellors should be removed, who, probably would be their successors. His lordship well knew that there were independent members in the house, who, though they disapproved lately of administration, were by no means desirous of being governed by a whig combination. By far the greater number of opposition members either originally were, or had become partisans of that connexion. He was aware, that not only the Rockingham system of ruling the nation by a confederacy, but also various opinions and measures were by no means consonant to the sentiments of all who now voted on their side.

The minister skilfully addresses himself to different sentiments and opinions.

side. Was the house (he said) prepared to new-model the constitution, to alter the duration of parliaments, and the rights of elections? Would it consent to a violation of the national faith with the crown, by adopting a celebrated bill of reform in the civil-list expenditure? Would it vote the independence of America? on which subject he understood there was as great difference between the two branches of opposition, as between opposition and ministers. Mr. Dundas eminently distinguished himself, and with his usual strength of explicit and direct argument, urged the house, before they voted for removing the present ministers, and throwing the government into the hands of their opponents, to have it thoroughly ascertained and accurately defined, what the objects of these opponents were; what system they proposed to adopt, and what measures they intended to pursue. These considerations had so much influence, that the supporters of ministers prevailed, and the resolution was negatived by a majority of ten, and a motion was carried for adjourning the house until the 15th. Many moderate and independent members wished for a coalition, which should prevent the country from being entirely governed by any party. Ministers were well inclined to that expedient, and during the adjournment made several attempts to give it effect, but to no purpose. On the 15th, sir John Rous made a motion similar to that of the 8th; no less than four hundred and eighty members were present, when ministers still carried the negative by a majority of nine. The opposite party immediately announced, that the resolutions would be again proposed; accordingly, on the 20th of March, a very crowded house attended, and lord Surry rose to make the promised motion. Before he had begun to speak, lord North rose to communicate to the house information which (he said) would supersede the necessity of the present motion, and

He carries a motion for an adjournment.

A coalition is attempted in vain.

The motion is repeated by lord Surry.

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Administration resigns.

and require an adjournment. Some disorder arose from what was conceived interruption to lord Surry; but being quieted, lord North informed the house, that there was *no administration*, and moved for an adjournment until new arrangements should be formed. He then took his leave of the commons as minister, by thanking them for their honourable support during so long a course of years, and in so many trying situations. He expressed his grateful sense of their flattering partiality towards him at all times, and their forbearance on many occasions. A successor of greater abilities, of better judgment, and more qualified for his situation, (he said,) was easy to be found; a successor, more zealously attached to the interests of his country, more anxious to promote them, more loyal to his sovereign, and more desirous of preserving the constitution whole and entire, he might be allowed to say, could not so easily be found. He concluded his speech with declaring, he did not mean to shrink from trial, but should always be prepared to meet inquiry, nay even demanded from his adversaries the strictest scrutiny.

Character of the North administration.

THUS ended the administration of lord North, a period, of which the greater part teemed with calamitous events, beyond any of the same duration to be found in the annals of British history. A war with so great, productive, and important part of our own community, lost thirteen flourishing and powerful colonies, the promoters of private and public wealth, and the nourishers of national force. Hostilities, whencesoever they arose, not only subtracted from us such constituents of strength, but added them to our inveterate enemies. Year after year our blood and treasure were expended to no purpose; myriads of men were killed, hundreds of millions were lavished, without obtaining any valuable object. Temporary gleams of partial success were followed by the permanent gloom of

general disaster. Were we to judge from result solely, and to draw a conclusion from the broad principle, that an uniform series of miscarriages in the natural course of human affairs, implies a great portion of misconduct, our estimate of this administration might be easily formed; but general rules, applied to the appreciation of conduct, often require to be nicely modified according to the actual circumstances. I trust it has appeared to the impartial reader, that the chief minister possessed very considerable talents and fair intentions, though mingled with defects, and acting in such emergencies as precluded beneficial exertion and consequences. But however erroneous and hurtful the series of measures was during this administration, far is the blame from being confined to ministers. It indeed belongs chiefly to parliament, which by its approbation sanctioned their acts, and to the people themselves, of whom the greater part was eager for commencing and continuing the war. When the nation censures this burthensome and disastrous war, productive of such an enormous load of taxes, *they must remember that it* ORIGINATED IN THEMSELVES.

The duke of Richmond's strictures on the execution of colonel Haines.

WHILE the house of commons was engaged in the momentous discussions, which I have been narrating, matters of a more personal nature were debated in the house of lords. The duke of Richmond, moved for an inquiry into the case of colonel Haines, executed at Charlestown, under the following circumstances. Haines an American officer, having been taken prisoner at Charlestown, had demanded his parole, but had been refused, unless he would take the oaths of allegiance. With this alternative he readily complied, and thus bound himself to perform the duties of a British subject. On the faith of his sworn fealty, he was permitted to go and reside on his estate in the interior country at some distance from Charlestown; he there raised two hundred men, attacked the innocent inhabitants

 who

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who would not join his banditti, murdered some, fired the houses of others, and threatened the lives of many who fled; by taking this ungenerous inhuman advantage of the lenity which he experienced, he added perjury to a breach of trust, and aggravated the forfeiture of his word by the blackest treachery. By the laws of war as established in the practice of nations, a person taken in arms against the state under which he had accepted his parole was liable to be hanged instantly without any farther proof than what should identify his person. Haines was taken in arms; and, his identity being admitted, he was by lord Rawdon and a board of officers sentenced to be hanged, and accordingly suffered the punishment due to such treachery. General Green had represented this judgment as a transgression of the laws of nations, and issued a manifesto to that effect, threatening to retaliate on British prisoners; but adduced neither argument nor authority to prove his positions. The duke of Richmond having received some partial account of these circumstances, described the procedure of lord Rawdon and the other officers to have been impolitic, illegal, and barbarous. Lord Stormont and the chancellor stated the actual case, and vindicated the noblemen and gentlemen in question from so heavy a charge. His grace, on reconsidering the subject, was induced to make a satisfactory explanation to the young Lord whose name had been called in question, and to declare to the house the high opinion of that brave soldier's humanity[d] and just intentions, though he still doubted whether the proceeding was strictly legal. It being understood in the house that a peerage was about to be conferred on lord George Germaine, as a mark of royal approbation for his ministerial conduct, opposition, not choosing directly

Strictures on lord George Germaine's promotion to the peerage.

[d] Lord Rawdon was inclined to save Haines, had such an extension of mercy been consistent with strict justice, and the example to be exhibited to treacherous violators of their parole.

to interfere with the king's right of bestowing that dignity, objected to it on a different ground, that it was inconsistent with the honour of that house, for a person who had received such a sentence from a court-martial, farther confirmed by his sovereign, to be raised to the peerage. A motion to that effect being made was immediately negatived, as a violent encroachment on the rights of the crown. Some days after, his lordship having now taken his seat in the upper house, the motion was again introduced; viscount Sackville vindicated his own character individually as being by the long confidence of his sovereign purified from the stigma of a sentence of twenty-two years before, under circumstances of very questionable impartiality and equity; and farther asserted the constitutional right of the Crown, to bestow the peerage according to its judgment and discretion.

New administration: the marquis of Rockingham first lord of the treasury, Mr. Fox and lord Shelburne secretaries of state.

DURING the adjournment of the house, a new administration was formed: the marquis of Rockingham was appointed first lord of the treasury; the earl of Shelburne and Mr. Fox secretaries of state; lord Camden president of the council; the duke of Grafton privy seal; lord John Cavendish chancellor of the exchequer; admiral Keppel, who was also created a viscount, first commissioner of the admiralty; general Conway commander in chief of the forces; the duke of Richmond, master general of the ordnance; lord Thurlow was continued in his office of lord high chancellor, Mr. Dunning was created baron Ashburton, and made chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. The following were understood to be the public measures which ministers undertook to support: peace with the Americans, and the acknowledgment of their independence was not to be a bar to the attainment of that object; they were to effect a substantial reform in several branches of the civil list expenditure, on the plan proposed by Mr. Burke, the diminution of the influence

Avowed plan of ministers.

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fluence of the crown; under which article the bills for excluding contractors from seats in parliament, and disqualifying the revenue officers from voting in the election of members, were included. The house adjourned for several days at Easter, and did not meet after the formation of the new ministry, to execute any business until April. On the 8th, Mr. Eden, who had been secretary to lord Carlisle late lord lieutenant, exhibited a view of the political history of Ireland, stated means which were then forming for rendering the country totally independent of the British legislature, and concluded with moving for leave to bring in a bill to repeal so much of the act of the 6th of George I. as asserted a right in the king and parliament of Great Britain to make laws to bind the kingdom of Ireland. Mr. Fox informed the house that Irish affairs had already undergone the discussion of several privy councils, and that the next day, he would be prepared to propose a preliminary measure on the subject; Eden therefore withdrew his motion. The next day messages were delivered to the two houses, recommending such an adjustment as would give mutual satisfaction to both kingdoms. The duke of Portland, the lord lieutenant, sent a similar message to both the houses of the Irish parliament, in consequence of which an address was moved by the celebrated Mr. Grattan, leader of the popular party. This representation fully and explicitly asserted the independent rights of the kingdom of Ireland, and proceeded to state the causes of those jealousies and discontents which had arisen in that country; the act of the 6th of George I. the power of suppressing or altering bills in the privy council, and the perpetual mutiny bill. It concluded with expressing the most sanguine expectations from his majesty's virtuous choice of a chief governor, and their great confidence in the wise, auspicious, and constitutional counsels which they had the satisfaction to see his majesty had adopted.

Adjustment with Ireland.

Mr. Grattan's address.

adopted. On the seventeenth of May, the repeal of the act complained of was moved in the house, and passed without opposition; and the parliament of Ireland was rendered independent on the parliament of Great Britain. In return for the liberal procedure of the British government in relinquishing its claims without stipulation or condition whatever, the parliament of Ireland immediately voted 100,000*l.* for the purpose of raising 20,000 Irish seamen for the service of his Majesty's navy.[e] The new ministers proceeded to their plans of reform and economy; bills were passed for disqualifying revenue-officers from voting in the election of members of parliament, and for rendering contractors incapable of sitting in the house of commons. On the 15th of April, a message was brought from the king, recommending the adoption of a plan for the curtailment of expences through all the branches of public expenditure. Mr. Burke, now paymaster-general of the forces, revived his plan of reform, and proposed as part of it, a bill to enable his majesty to pay off the debt on his civil list, to prevent the like in future, and to carry into a law the retrenchments which his majesty had graciously proposed to make in his household. Without entering into the detail of the reduction which was effected by this bill when passed into a law, it may be sufficient to state in general, that its annual saving amounted to 72,368*l.* He followed the bill by another, for the regulation of his own office: the principal object of the latter act, was to prevent the possibility of any balance accumulating in the hands of the paymaster-general. On the 3d of May, Mr. Wilkes having made his annual motion for expunging the famous resolution of 1769, respecting the Middlesex election, at last succeeded by a majority of 115 to 47.

Independence of the Irish parliament ascertained.

Part of Mr. Burke's scheme of reform is adopted.

[e] The sum of 50,000*l.* was also voted for purchasing an estate, and erecting a mansion therein, to be settled on Henry Grattan, Esq. and the heirs of his body, as a testimony of their gratitude for the unequalled benefits conferred by him on that kingdom.

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Conduct of Mr. William Pitt: he connects himself with no party.

MR. WILLIAM PITT had voted against lord North's system and measures, but never formed any connexion with the Rockingham confederacy, and accepted no place under the new administration. Young as this gentleman was, he had studied moral and political philosophy more thoroughly, knew them more deeply, radically, and extensively, than most of the ablest men of the time, though matured by experience. He had accurately investigated the history, detail, and spirit of the British constitution, comprehended its objects, principles, and actual state: he conceived it to be the highest effort of human wisdom, and its support essential to the prosperity and happiness of the nation. He saw that, notwithstanding the excellence of our polity, various corruptions had arisen, and various evils had issued from legislature, very pernicious to the country. Considering one of the chief advantages of our system to be the equipoise of the component estates, he imputed recent measures and miscarriages to a derangement in the proper balance. Like other young men of lofty genius, grand conceptions, habituated to scientific processes, and accustomed to generalization, but not yet matured in the practice of affairs, in devising a corrective he formed theories which subsequent experience could not entirely confirm. There was in many parts of the kingdom a disposition of election franchises totally disproportionate both to numbers and to property; and hence there appeared to be a defect in the representation of the commons of England. This inequality was founded neither on alleged merits or property on the part of the electors. In a considerable number of boroughs, there was not only a paucity of voters, but the few that enjoyed franchises were in such a state as to render them in a great measure dependent on individuals. As there were evidently very great abuses in the administration of affairs, as legislature appeared in many instances

He projects a reform in parliament,

stances to have sanctioned measures very detrimental to the country, it was natural to impute the conduct of part of the majorities to the corrupt influence of the crown, and the efficacy of ministerial seduction. To remove the alleged source of evil, many patriotic men projected a reform in parliament. Lord Chatham had been favourable to an alteration in this department of the constitution: his son formed the same general opinion. To the contemplation of philosophical theory it appeared an anomaly in the British polity, that seven thousand individuals should return three-eighths of the national representatives, while seven hundred thousand not inferior in property, merit, or any other constituent of superiority, had not a single vote.[r] He therefore resolved to propose some plan for meliorating the representation. Aware, however, of the delicate ground on which he trod, he proceeded very cautiously; intending to investigate facts before he drew a conclusion or constructed schemes, he confined himself to a motion that a committee should be appointed to inquire into the state of the representation in parliament, and to report their sentiments to the house. This subject was not then debated as a party question, but as a proposition of general policy. Of men of talents, the younger, such as Messrs. Fox, Pitt, and Sheridan, were chiefly in favour of the inquiry: the older and more experienced, such as Mr. Burke, lord North, and Mr. Dundas, opposed the agitation of topics which they conceived might excite a ferment in the country. They argued that representation, as

and proposes an inquiry into the state of representation.

Arguments for and against.

[r] It is probable the great manufacturers of Manchester may be more interested in the prosperity of their country than a journeyman carpenter at Shoreham; that Dr. Samuel Johnson, or Mr. David Hume, might be more competent judges of a lawgiver than a journeyman ropemaker of the same noted repository of electors. The capitalists and philosophers had no vote, the labouring mechanics have a vote. Still, however, the property of the man of wealth is protected, and benefits both himself and his country; the talents of the men of genius were remunerated, and produced honour and advantage to their country as much as if they had all possessed privilege of polling for a member of parliament.

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it stood, though in theory apparently irregular, assembled in parliament as much collective virtue, wisdom, and property, as could be brought together by any mode that might be adopted; that parliament by its present constitution, was as much disposed, qualified, and empowered to answer the ends of legislature, as it could be rendered by any increase or new modification of representatives and electoral franchises. Besides sentiments had begun to be entertained and inculcated in certain classes respecting government, very different from those of the supporters of the present inquiry in parliament. Doctrines tending to diminish the veneration of Britain for our constitutional establishments, and to recommend the visionary theories of democratical republicanism, were published by men of considerable name and authority, and rapidly spread among their peculiar adherents. Though these sciolists were understood to have no connexion with the ablest and most eminent advocates of parliamentary reform, yet it was easily foreseen that they might arrive at great influence over the weaker votaries of political change, in whose undistinguishing minds their wild and extravagant theories might pass for the soundest philosophy, or the most beneficial lessons of practical wisdom. From these considerations, the most experienced of our able senators opposed the motion, which was negatived by a majority of one hundred and sixty-one to one hundred and forty-one. On the 18th of October, lord John Cavendish moved ten resolutions, by which the house should declare the necessity of proceeding early the next session with those regulations for the reform of the civil list, which it was thought too late to complete in the present. While such measures were proceeding in the senate, Mr. Fox commenced the exertion of his talents as a minister, by offering to Holland the renewal of that peace and amity which had so long subsisted between the

The supporters of reform are out-voted.

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the respective powers, upon the terms of the treaty of 1674. In order to effect so desirable an object, he proposed hostilities should be immediately suspended: this offer was made through the Russian minister, but was very coldly received by the Dutch, who were not disposed to put an end to the war without their allies. He also made overtures for peace with the Americans: soon after he was appointed minister, he proposed to recognise the independence of the united states of America unconditionally, and not to reserve it as a term of peace. The proposal being agreed to in council, lord Shelburne officially wrote to the commander in chief to communicate this resolution to congress, as well as the determination of parliament to put an end to the American war; but that body would not agree to a separate peace. Before, however, the resolutions of the provincials on this subject could be reported to the British government, an event happened, the consequence of which induced Mr. Fox and his connexions to resign their places in administration. On the 1st of July died Charles marquis of Rockingham, first lord of the treasury; a man of plain and sound understanding, unquestioned probity, great benevolence, the most liberal munificence, and patriotic intentions. He was a lover of the British constitution, but educated in the prejudices as well as principles of the whig party, he early imbibed and always retained an opinion, that it was necessary for the well being of this country, for its government to be in the hands of a whig connexion. His adherents and supporters either adopted or professed to adopt this opinion: the ablest of these, Messrs. Burke and Fox, extraordinary as their talents were, appeared to rest their consequence less on their individual powers than on the rank which they held in the whig confederacy. On the death of the marquis of Rockingham the duke of Portland was esteemed by his party the head of the whigs,

Overtures of Mr. Fox for peace with the Dutch, premature.

He endeavours to pacify America.

Death of the marquis of Rockingham.

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Lord Shelburne is made prime minister.

Mr. Fox and his friends resign.

Mr. William Pitt is appointed chancellor of the exchequer.

whigs, and on that account the properest person to be first lord of the treasury. His majesty, however, using his prerogative of appointing his own servants, made choice of lord Shelburne. Lord John Cavendish and Mr. Fox soon afterwards resigned their offices, and were followed by the duke of Portland as lord lieutenant, Mr. Montague from the board of treasury, lord Duncannon and Mr. J. Townshend from the admiralty, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Lee the solicitor-general. Mr. William Pitt was made chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. T. Townshend and lord Grantham secretaries of state, Mr. Pepper Arden succeeded Mr. Lee, the lord advocate of Scotland filled the place of Mr. Barré, who was removed to the pay-office, and earl Temple was appointed to the lieutenancy of Ireland. Parliament having met the 9th of July, for the first time after this change, Mr. Fox undertook to explain the motives of his late resignation. It had (he said) been understood by lord Rockingham's friends; that lord Shelburne had, on coming into office, acceded to their measures; that he had sacrificed his own opinion respecting the independency of America to the sentiments of his colleagues; but Mr. Fox found totally different principles were adopted, which he would not then detail, and thought it his duty to resign. He pledged himself, when circumstances would admit of a particular statement of his reasons, to prove that they were well founded.

Mr. Fox gives a general account of the reasons of his resignation.

India affairs and reports of the committees.

THE two committees continued to bestow unremitting attention on East India affairs. Their reports were voluminous beyond example, and universally allowed to be drawn up with the greatest ability and discrimination. The first object of inquiry and original cause of its being set on foot, was the conduct of judges; this being investigated, produced a report, of which the following are the heads: it appeared that the English judges had taken cognizance

nizance of causes between native land-holders, not in the service of the company, consequently, by the act of parliament, not within the jurisdiction of the English courts; and had proceeded in several cases to inflict severe penalties on those who refused to acknowledge their authority. The most important instances alleged of extra-judicial assumption, were in civil actions, the Patna and the Cossijurah causes, in the first, two native magistrates, men of rank and respectability, were imprisoned, and their effects confiscated by an English sheriff, for their official conduct in a case which was not under the jurisdiction of the English tribunal. In the second, the rajah of Cossijurah having resisted the jurisdiction of the court, the sheriff had dispatched an armed force to compel obedience; but the governor-general and council ordered a more numerous body to march speedily, and prevent what they conceived to be illegal acts. The most noted instance of interference in extra-judicial causes of criminal process, was the trial and execution of Nundcomar for forgery. Nundcomar, a bramin of the highest cast, was tried, condemned and hanged on a statute of George II. against forgery, strictly confined, and appropriated to England and its paper currency. Neither the person accused nor the person whose name was forged were subject to the British jurisdiction: by the laws of India, forgery is not punishable capitally: thus a man was put to death by a court to which he was not amenable for a crime not capital by the laws to which he was amenable. On these reports several resolutions were brought forward by general Smith, some of which were to censure Mr. Sullivan for neglect of duty in delaying to transmit the act of regulation to the servants of the company, and instructions to release the unjustly imprisoned magistrates of Patna; and also for restraining one of the secretaries of the India company, by an oath, from giving information to the committee. The other

motions

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motions related to the conduct of sir Elijah Impey. On these resolutions, the house addressed his majesty to recal sir Elijah Impey. The committee, in discussing the conduct of judicature, found some proceedings in which Mr. Hastings appeared to have exceeded the authority vested in the governor-general by the act of parliament. The chairman, therefore, proposed that a new act should be introduced, to ascertain the power of the governor-general and council of Bengal.

The reports represent the system of government to be erroneous and hurtful.

THE secret committee took a much wider range of inquiry than the select committee, and extended its investigations to the proceedings of deliberative and executive offices, as well as judicative; and also included the presidency of Madras with Calcutta.

Exertions of Mr. Dundas.

The vigorous genius and indefatigable industry of Mr. Dundas produced one hundred and eleven resolutions, which he arranged into three classes, each of which consisted of three distinct heads; the two first of a public and general nature, the third of personal culpability. The first class regarded the general system of our government in India, and included a severe censure on the conduct of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Hornsby, with a declaration, that it was the duty of the directors to recal these officers of the company from employments in which they had been guilty of flagrant malversation. The second and third classes of resolutions respected the affairs of the Carnatic, and contained very severe animadversions on the general administration of the presidency, with specific charges of great moment against sir Thomas Rumbold, late governor of Madras, Mr. Whitehill and Mr. Perrin, members of the council. Bills of pains and penalties were passed against these gentlemen, and the usual regulations annexed, to prevent themselves from leaving the kingdom, or their effects from being confiscated.

Mr. Hastings implicated.

Bills of pains and penalties against governor Rumbold.

Supplies.

THE supplies of the year were one hundred thousand

sand seamen, with nearly the same number of land forces as in the former year. The loan this year was 13,510,000*l.*: the terms were near six per cent. but as stocks was so low as fifty-four, and money could not be borrowed at a much cheaper rate, the conditions underwent little animadversion; the new taxes were on insurances, bills of exchange, inland water-carriage and coasting navigation, five per cent. additional duty on all excise and customs on brandies, about ten per cent. on the necessary article of small-beer, and twenty per cent. on salt and tobacco: imposts so much affecting the lower classes, were the subjects of loud complaint. On the 11th of July his majesty prorogued parliament, and in his speech steered very clear of every allusion to political changes.

Session rises,

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West Indies. — French recover St. Eustatius to the Dutch. — Invest St. Christophers — bold attempt of sir Samuel Hood to relieve the Island — skilful operations of that admiral — but for want of military force, ineffectual. — St. Christophers surrenders, and also Nevis and Montserrat. — Apprehensions for Jamaica. — Sir George Rodney arriving from Britain with a reinforcement, resumes the command. — Objects of the admiral. — De Grasse sails from Martinico. — Rodney pursues the enemy, and overtakes them off Guadaloupe. — Battle of the 12th of April — gallant efforts of the French — at length Rodney breaks the line — gains a decisive victory — takes or destroys a great part of the fleet. — Principle of naval warfare illustrated by this victory — important advantages. — Summary of Rodney's exploits against our three naval enemies — created a peer. — North America — sir Henry Clinton resigns the command — succeeded by Carleton. — No active hostilities. — East Indies. — Pecuniary deficiencies. — Schemes of Mr. Hastings to procure resources for carrying on the war. — The zemindars — tenure of their possessions. — Cheyt Sing — rajah of Benares. — Stipulated subsidy. — Mr. Hastings's views of Cheyt Sing's relation to the company. — Applies for an extraordinary subsidy to answer the company's emergency — granted repeatedly with reluctance. — Hastings repeats his demand. — Proceeds to Benares to enforce compliance. — Conduct of Cheyt Sing and his people — he flies from Benares. — Alleged disaffection and machinations of the Begums. — At the instance of Mr. Hastings their treasures confiscated. — Hastings detaches the Mahratta prince from the confederacy of native powers. — Suffrein expects to crush the British naval force in India — disappointed. — Various conflicts between him and sir Edward Hughes — though not decisive, are favourable to Britain. — Campaign of Sir Eyre Coote against Hyder Ally. — Colonel Braithwait's corps surprised and overpowered by Tippoo Saib. — — Signal victory of sir Eyre Coote at Red-hill — Hyder Ally completely discomfited — worn out by fatigue, sir Eyre Coote resigns the command. — Hastings succeeds in putting an

an end to the Indian confederacy. — Operations of sir Edward Hughes. — Expedition against Mysore from the Malabar coast. — Tippoo Saib surprizes general Matthews in a defile, and captures his detachment. — Death of sir Eyre Coote, the military saviour of India. — Hastings the political saviour. — Farther operations stopt by intelligence from Europe. — Europe. — Siege of Minorca by a great armament — the garrison after a gallant defence capitulates. — Fleets of France, Spain, and Holland. — Admiral Barrington intercepts part of a French convoy destined for the East Indies. — Exploit of captain Jarvis. — Lord Howe prevents the Dutch fleet from sailing. — Combined fleets sail to the channel — disappointed, they return southward. — Loss of the Royal George and admiral Kempenfeldt. — Renewed preparations against Gibraltar — enormous battering ships — large army and fleet — the besiegers calculate that twenty-four hours would reduce Gibraltar. — Elliot anticipates their attack — pours red-hot balls on their batteries — again destroys their preparations, and shews their hopes to be groundless — they again attempt to blockade. — Lord Howe sails to supply and relieve Gibraltar — effects his purpose in the face of a much superior fleet — offers the enemy battle, which they decline. — General purpose of Bourbon ambition against Britain frustrated. — Britain maintains the sovereignty of the sea. — The belligerent powers at length convinced that their hostilities are reciprocally ruinous. — Overtures for a general peace — the preliminaries signed at Paris. — Independence of America acknowledged. — Treaties between Britain and the respective powers. — General view of this arduous contest. — Her resistance against such a confederation of foes manifested the immense resources — lofty genius and invincible spirit of the British nation. — Folly of naval states provoking to hostilities, the mistress of the ocean. — Consequences proximate and eventual to the respective parties.

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1782. West Indies. The French recover St. Eustatius to the Dutch.

IN the close of the year 1781, while the British fleet was unsuccessfully occupied in attempting to relieve the army in Virginia, the marquis de Bouillé, governor of Martinico, invaded St. Eustatius with two thousand men, easily subdued that Island, being defended by only seven hundred men belonging to the thirteenth and fifteenth regiments.

Besides

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Besides the inferiority of force, the garrison having no expectations of such an attempt, were in a state of security, and indeed oscitancy, which greatly facilitated the success of their enemies. A considerable part of the effects captured by the British still remained on the island, so that it proved a very valuable prize. In the beginning of January, the French retook the Dutch settlements of Demarara and Essequibo, and by restoring them to Holland, confirmed the amity of the aristocratic party in that country towards their new ally. The count de Grasse was now returned from North America to the Leeward Islands, and commanded a fleet of thirty-two ships of the line; sir Samuel Hood was also come back to Barbadoes. Trusting to their superiority, the French commanders made an attempt on the valuable island of St. Christophers. The land forces under the command of de Bouillé, consisted of eight thousand men, escorted and seconded by the fleet. On the 11th of January, they effected a landing. The British garrison commanded by general Fraser, did not exceed six hundred men; taking possession however of a very strong post, the commandant fortified himself, in hopes of holding out till succour should arrive. The whole military force of Britain in those islands was inconsiderable; notwithstanding this consideration, and the comparative smallness of his naval force, sir Samuel Hood determined to venture one of those bold measures which have generally terminated with victory to British arms, and which in her relative situation to her foes, instead of being chargeable with temerity, are the wisest that can be pursued. He departed from Antigua, took on board general Prescot and the few troops that could be afforded, and immediately sailed to attack the enemy's fleet. The count de Grasse was much surprised at the appearance of the English fleet, and expected to profit by what he deemed their

They invest St. Christophers.

Bold attempt of Sir Samuel Hood, to relieve the island.

rashness: thinking that by an increase of sea-room he could the more easily avail himself of his superior numbers, he moved away from shore. Sir Samuel Hood instantly saw the advantage that might be derived from the enemy's departure, and while they were forming their line a-head, pushed into the road which they had left. The enemy were not only astonished at the ability and judgment with which this design was conceived and formed, and the boldness and nautical skill with which it was executed, but alarmed at the consequences which must ensue from its success. They were apprehensive that the British fleet might cut off the communication between the French naval and military force. Hoping to overpower our armament by their numbers, they, on the 25th of January, attacked the rear of the squadron commanded by commodore Affleck; but that brave officer, seconded by lord Robert Manners and captain Cornwallis (heroes worthy of the marquis of Granby and earl Cornwallis), and the other ships of the division, repelled the enemy. The next day de Grasse made a general attack, but he was again repelled with severe loss; and sir Samuel Hood retained his position between the enemy's fleet and army, without any farther interruption. Meanwhile the French General had made considerable progress in the investment of the fort; but from the strength of the place, small as the garrison was, he found that a regular siege would be necessary. On the 16th of January, he opened the trenches, proceeded with his works, and mounted his batteries, which soon played with terrible effect. The British continued to make the most gallant resistance; admiral Hood sent general Prescot ashore, in hopes to be able to assist the besieged; but finding the attempt impracticable, from the number and disposition of the enemy, re-embarked his troops. The garrison, after having with the greatest patience and fortitude withstood

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Skilful operations of that admiral;

but for want of a military force, ineffectual.

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St. Christophers surrenders,

and also Nevis and Montserrat.

Apprehensions for Jamaica.

stood the host of their enemies, became every day weaker both in number and fortifications; and at last finding all their efforts hopeless, agreed to a capitulation which was concluded on honourable terms. The French fleet being joined by two ships, admiral Hood, now, that the preservation of the island was no longer in view, resolved not to hazard an engagement until a reinforcement which was daily expected should arrive from England; he therefore quitted his present situation, and retired towards Antigua. The islands of Nevis and Montserrat followed the fortune of St. Christophers; so that of all our former valuable possessions in the West Indies, Jamaica, Barbadoes, and Antigua, now only remained, and affairs wore a very inauspicious aspect to the British interests. Jamaica, the great object of Spanish ambition, was now proposed to be attacked by the count de Grasse, who was to be joined by a Spanish fleet and army for that purpose. The Spaniards had stationed at Hispaniola and Cuba, about twenty-six ships of the line and a considerable body of soldiers: the fleet, when combined, would amount to sixty ships of the line, the troops to about twenty thousand; and a great naval and military reinforcement was daily expected under admiral Guichen. The land force of Britain, in Jamaica, consisted of six battalions of regulars, amounting to two thousand four hundred men, and the militia about double that number. From the British fleet, so outnumbered, they could have expected little assistance. The goodness of the troops, the zeal and bravery of the inhabitants, together with the natural strength of the country, might have long withstood so mighty a host, and perhaps ultimately, with the assistance of the climate so peculiarly fatal to Spanish indolence, repelled the invaders: but the conflict would have been arduous, and a great part of the valuable property must have been destroyed during its operations; the well-

well-grounded apprehension therefore of such an attempt was extremely alarming to the islanders themselves, and to all interested in the fate of so estimable a possession. While affairs were in this situation, and the hopes and fears of the contending parties so anxiously aroused, intelligence arrived that Guichen's fleet and convoy, after their encounter with admiral Kempenfeldt, had been shattered by successive tempests; and unable to proceed on their voyage, returned to France, and two ships of the line only were strong enough to join de Grasse.

Lord Rodney arriving in the West Indies, resumes the command of the fleet.

On the 19th of February, sir George Rodney with twelve ships of the line arrived from England at Barbadoes, and a few days after joining sir Samuel Hood, took command of the whole fleet before the end of the month; being reinforced by two more ships of the line from England, the British fleet consisted of thirty-six ships of the line. Having received information that a second convoy had sailed from Brest, in order to compensate to a certain degree the failure of the former, and was conveying provisions, naval and military stores, he tried to intercept it before it reached de Grasse; but the French convoy found means to elude the danger, and to join the admiral on the 20th of March, in Fort Royal, where he was repairing his ships with a view of sailing as soon as possible to the westward: admiral Rodney stationed himself off St. Lucia to watch his motions. It was the object of the French admiral to avoid fighting, until he should join the Spaniards at Hispaniola; the British commander proposed to prevent the intended junction, and to bring the French to a decisive battle. The fate of the British West Indies depended on the success or miscarriage of the admiral's design; if the two hostile fleets joined, our naval force would no longer be able to preserve our islands from ruin. If Rodney could bring de

Objects of the admirals.

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Grasse to fight, the former having thirty-six ships of the line, the latter thirty-four, but balancing our superiority of number by size, weight of metal, and a greater multitude of men, the fleets would be very near an equality of physical force; consequently there could be little doubt that the ability, skill, and prowess of England would be triumphant. De Grasse was stationed at Martinico; admiral Rodney at Gros Islet bay in St. Lucia, and his fleet ready to sail, the van was commanded by admiral Drake, the rear by sir Samuel Hood, and the centre by Rodney himself. Frigates were disposed near the French fleet to give the English admiral intelligence if they sailed. Accordingly, on the 8th of April, news arrived that de Grasse had weighed anchor, and in a very short time the same day Rodney began to follow his course. De Grasse, in order to avoid the British fleet, instead of sailing directly westward to Hispaniola, chose a northern and circuitous course along the coast of Guadaloupe. Had he proceeded in the direct track which was to leeward, he thought he could not avoid being overtaken by the English, but by coasting between the Islands, as the French were much better acquainted with these channels, he expected to baffle their pursuit. The British signals however were repeated with such quickness and exactness through the intervening stations, that the fleet sailed within five hours of the French, and came in sight of them that very same night near Dominica. De Grasse, thinking that a distant and running fight would be unavoidable, formed his line for that purpose. Early next morning when sir George Rodney was making dispositions for battle, he found himself becalmed. A breeze however reached the van between eight and nine in the morning, without extending to the centre and rear. The first division of the British fleet being thus separated from the rest, count de Grasse willingly engaged, hoping by his whole fleet to cut off the advanced part of ours.

De Grasse sails from Martinico.

Rodney pursues the enemy,

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Notwithstanding the superiority of the enemy, sir Samuel Hood made so bold a stand as to sustain all their efforts, though not without his ships suffering material damage. At length Rodney himself being able to come up with part of the centre division, the battle became less unequal. De Grasse, who from the command of the wind could either fight closely or distantly, drew off his fleet, and before the rest of the British arrived, was entirely out of reach of battle. The next day admiral Rodney was obliged to employ in refitting the damaged ships, and transposing the van and rear, as those who had not been in the late action were the fittest for beginning a new conflict. On the 11th, the enemy's fleet weathered Guadaloupe, and got to such a distance that they were barely perceivable. About noon that day two of the enemy's ships were seen so much a-stern of the rest of the fleet, that the British had no doubt of cutting them off: a signal for general chase was thrown out, the pursuit was so vigorous that they would have been undoubtedly captured had not the whole French fleet returned for their protection. This movement gave the British commanders infinitely more delight, than they would have derived from the possession of the two ships. They perceived that the enemy could not avoid a close engagement, and during the night the line was formed in a most masterly disposition. The enemy, sensible that they must now fight, were also arranged with great skill. The scene of action was a bason of water lying between the islands of Guadaloupe, Dominica, the Saints, and Marigalante; and bounded both to windward and leeward by dangerous shores.

and overtakes them off Guadaloupe.

On the 12th of April, at seven in the morning, the hostile fleets met upon opposite tacks. The signal for close fighting was thrown out and punctually observed, the line was formed at only

Battle of the 12th of April.

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a cable's length distance, our ships as they came up ranged slowly and closely along the enemy's line, and under their lee, where they gave and received a tremendous fire. Admiral Drake, who now commanded the van, began the battle with the greatest gallantry; received, and with the most efficacious energy returned, the shot of the whole French line. His leading ship the Marlborough, commanded by captain Penny, was peculiarly distinguished, received and returned at the nearest distance the first broadside of twenty-three French ships of war, and had the fortune only to have three men killed, and sixteen wounded. As the ships were so near, every ball took effect, and the French ships being very full of men, great numbers were slain. The French made a most gallant resistance, which they were enabled to do the more effectually as the British rear was long prevented by a calm from taking any active share in the battle. They had fought five hours, before the British, though evidently the more forcible, had gained any decisive advantage; when between twelve and one o'clock, Rodney, with four ships, bore athwart the enemy, and BROKE THEIR LINE; being admirably supported by his division, he doubled upon them, separated their force, and threw them into irrecoverable disorder. As soon as he had effected this movement, he threw out a signal for the van to tack; admiral Drake instantly complying, by this means got to windward of the enemy, and completed the general confusion. The French van bore to leeward in an attempt to restore their broken line, but could not succeed. Meanwhile sir Samuel Hood had reached the scene of battle with part of his division, and contributed to crush the enemy. Even after all order and connected system was entirely destroyed on the part of the French, their ships singly and severally fought with the most inflexible courage. De Grasse himself, in

Gallant efforts of the French.

At length Rodney breaks the line.

Gains a decisive victory.

the

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the Ville de Paris, after the route became general, made a most obstinate resistance, but at last struck to sir Samuel Hood. The Hector, the Glorieux, the Cæsar of 74 guns, the Ardent of 64, were also captured; the Diadem was sunk; three thousand of the enemy were killed or drowned, and six thousand were wounded, and about two thousand taken prisoners: most of their ships that escaped being taken or sunk, were so damaged as to be unfit for service. The loss on the side of the English was about a thousand killed and wounded: among the slain was captain Blair, who eminently distinguished himself on that glorious day, and also had acquired great renown the year before, in the Dolphin man of war. Among the wounded was lord Robert Manners, brother to the duke of Rutland; this brave young nobleman, though not twenty-seven years of age, had acquired distinguished glory in the Resolution, a seventy-four gun-ship, during a series of brilliant actions, which he crowned in the last conflict. His wound proved mortal, and deprived the country of his virtues a few weeks after the victory.

Captures the admiral, and takes or destroys a great part of the French fleet.

NAVAL critics, in reviewing the operations which terminated in so brilliant a victory to Britain, have adduced, or at least confirmed general principles of the highest importance to the service. In the first place, they observed it illustrated the wise policy of a commander of British ships and British sailors being adventurously bold. If admiral Rodney, when he found the rear division becalmed, had endeavoured to avoid battle, the enemy might have escaped; it also shewed, that in close fight British ships and seamen possess a very great superiority, and that the increase of their advantage in proportion to their closeness, renders it generally expedient for British commanders to break the enemy's line. The consequences of this victory were important and extensive, thirty-six chests of money, destined

Principle of naval warfare illustrated by this victory.

Important advantages.

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to pay the army and fleet in the West-Indies, were found in the Ville de Paris.[g]

THE day after the battle admiral Rodney endeavoured to pursue the remains of the French fleet, but was becalmed for three days at Guadaloupe. Sir Samuel Hood, having been but a short time in the fight, was fitter for pursuit than the other ships, the admiral therefore dispatched that commander in hopes of overtaking or intercepting the remains of the enemy. On the 19th of April he captured two ships of the line in the Mona Passage, between Porto Rico and Hispaniola. Admiral Rodney proceeded with the disabled ships and prizes to Jamaica, was rejoined by sir Samuel Hood off cape Tiberoon, in St. Domingo; and in the end of April having arrived at the place of his destination, was received by the grateful islanders as their glorious deliverer. Rodney indeed had been the most brilliant promoter of naval glory, the effectual supporter of naval power, and beneficial protector of commerce and wealth to this country, of any personage whose actions reflected a lustre on the annals of the American war; in two years and a quarter he had struck a severe blow against each of our three European enemies. In his victory over the Spaniards he broke that naval force which some months before ostentatiously paraded on our coasts; reducing the Dutch, he deprived them of the chief sinew of war; by the discomfiture of the French he completely overthrew all the mighty projects of the Bourbons for exalting themselves by ruining our plantations and marine force. He shewed himself a gallant and skilful sailor and an able commander, that could direct

Summary of Rodney's exploits against our three naval enemies.

[g] This ship had an hundred and ten guns, and no less than thirteen hundred men, including soldiers, on board. She had been a present to Louis XV. from the city of Paris, during the low state of the French navy resulting from the last war in which that prince had been engaged with England. She had cost one hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds before she was fitted for sea, and was the only first-rate man of war that had ever been captured.

all

all the excellence of British ships and British seamen. Such a commander supplied with a force equal to the enemy, was successful, and always must be successful. This victory not only secured our West India possessions, but in a great degree ended the West India war, as no operations of any importance were afterwards undertaken in that part of the world. Soon after sir George Rodney had so essentially served his king and country, intelligence arrived that the new administration had resolved he should serve no longer, and had appointed admiral Pigot to take the command in his stead. Whatever that gentleman's talents might be, his situation had never afforded him opportunities of such exertion or display as to demonstrate the policy of the minister, who, to avail himself of Mr. Pigot's professional efforts, superseded admiral Rodney. Our gallant veteran relinquished a command in which he had now left so little undone, and returned home to enjoy the gratitude of his king and country, and the honours which had been conferred by his sovereign. The victorious admiral was called to the house of lords, because he had made the best of a force entrusted to his command, by conquering the enemy and discomfiting their designs. Sir Samuel Hood also, who next to admiral Rodney had so eminently distinguished himself, was promoted to the well-earned honour of an Irish peerage. Messrs. Drake and Affleck for their respective services were created baronets.

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He is created a peer.

North America. Sir Henry Clinton resigns the command, and is succeeded by sir Guy Carleton.

In North America sir Henry Clinton having resigned the command, was succeeded by sir Guy Carleton, but no military transactions of any importance took place in this campaign. The resolutions against the American war, and the negotiations for peace, although they did not induce the provincials to a separate treaty, yet in a great measure suspended hostilities. The armies, indeed, were nearly equal in strength. Carleton had no

No active hostility.

motive

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motive to attack the enemy for the sake of advancing in a country into which all progress was now renounced, and Washington had no inducement to assail a force which was still very formidable. The Spaniards finding all their hopes of important conquest in the West Indies disappointed, employed their armaments in less considerable enterprises. The governor of Cuba, with five thousand men, made an attack on the Bahama islands, which being defended by about two hundred only, capitulated. The French, with the remainder of their beaten fleet, concerted a predatory expedition against the property of the Hudson's Bay company, and acquired a considerable booty. On the other hand, the English made a successful excursion to the Musquito shore, and captured fort Dalin, with a great number of Spanish troops.

In Africa, the Dutch was dispossessed of most of their settlements, except the Cape of Good Hope; but they were still able to retain this important key to India.

East Indies.

While in the Carnatic those warlike preparations were carrying on which are narrated among the transactions of 1780 and 1781, the governor-general was not inactive in Bengal. Aware of the dispositions of the native powers to join in the confederacy against British India, it was an important part of his duty to counteract their designs. He had also the task of providing resources and means of defence against both treacherous friends and professed enemies. The expences of the present war, in which all the English presidencies were so deeply, and one at least dangerously involved, rose to such a height, that even the finances of Bengal proved unequal to their supply. It was therefore necessary, not only to be very strict in exacting the revenue, but either to create new sources or to relinquish the defence of our possessions in India. The governor-general anxiously desirous of securing

Pecuniary deficiencies.

such

such valuable interests, appeared to think that the preservation of British India might justify measures that nothing but political necessity could sanction. The Indian land-holders are called zemindars, and the chief zemindars are called rajahs. The great estates appeared to have held of the mogul, as lord paramount of the soil: the inferior zemindars to have held of the rajahs. A doubt was alleged, whether the tenure of the zemindars was stable on the performance of certain conditions, or dependant on the discretion of the superior in the various degrees, from the lowest tenant to the emperor. The former mode would unquestionably be the most consonant to the ideas of free-born Britons, but the latter was no less agreeable to the analogy of Mahomedan despotism. Whatever power the emperor himself possessed over the lands or effects of the zemindars, he delegated to the collectors of revenues, and consequently had transferred to the India company over the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, by the treaty concluded in 1764. The extent and limits of the jurisdictions which by this treaty the company acquired over either the lands or effects of the inhabitants, were to be defined not by any reference to British rules of property, but by the usage and laws of India. Lord Clive, at the treaty of Illahabad, had guaranteed to Bulwart Sing, the zemindary of Benares, subject to the payment of the former revenue to the nabob of Oude. The guarantee did not extend to the rajah's family, and on the death of Bulwart Sing, in 1770, it appeared that the zemindary of Benares was not hereditary, as Cheyt Sing, the late rajah's son, paid to the nabob a fine of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, with an increase of rent of three hundred thousand pounds, in order to be admitted to his father's tenements.[h] The nabob

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Schemes of Mr. Hastings to procure resources for the war.

The zemindars, and the tenure of their possessions.

Cheyt Sing.

[h] Annual Register, 1783, chap. i.

afterwards

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afterwards endeavoured to extort one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds more from his vassal, which, though prevented by the interference of Mr. Hastings, afforded a presumptive proof of the discretionary tenure by which the zemindary was held. In 1775, under Sujah Dowla the nabob of Oude, the sovereignty of Benares was transferred to the company, and thus Cheyt Sing became vassal to that body on precisely the same tenure as he had before been to the nabob of Oude. Mr. Hastings, soon after this agreement, authorized his resident to assure Cheyt Sing of the company's approbation of his conduct, and on that account that he should be allowed to occupy the zemindary on the same conditions as before, and at the same time recommended him to raise a body of two thousand horse. Mr. Hastings, from the analogy of Indian tenures, considered Cheyt Sing as a tenant at will, with a general promise of holding his lands during good behaviour, and thought himself the steward of the proprietor, entitled to interpret the goodness of the tenant's conduct, by the fidelity and gratitude which he should manifest towards the proprietors, from whose bounty he was allowed to retain his lands.[1] The requisite exertions might be greater or less according to circumstances: it was evident that the terms on which he held Benares were extremely advantageous, and as obviously Mr. Hastings appeared to conceive that his tenure was good conduct and attachment to the company. His dispositions, the state of affairs soon put to the test: intelligence being received of the war with France, and a variety of circumstances having intimated the design of a native confederacy, it was determined by the governor-general and council, in the month of July 1778, that the rajah Cheyt Sing should be required

Mr. Hastings's views of the rajah's relation to the company.

[1] This may be gathered from his defence, and the writings of his friends.

required to contribute an extraordinary subsidy of five lacks of rupees towards the expences which this new exigency would impose on government during the current year. The rajah paid this advanced rent with great unwillingness; the next year he testified much stronger reluctance, although the increase of hostilities rendered supplies still more indispensably necessary; and though known to be extremely rich, pretended to be in the most distressing poverty. Mr. Hastings found him so slow in his payments, that he sent two battalions of seapoys to Benares to be paid and subsisted by the rajah, until he made good the required sum. The third year he made still stronger professions of poverty, and the subsidy was procured with greater difficulty. In 1781, when the designs of the confederacy had not only unfolded themselves, but in the Carnatic were carried into successful execution, the same additional subsidy was demanded, and also the two thousand horse which he had been desired to keep in readiness when protection was promised him by the company on his first having become their vassal. It is to be observed, that the whole amount of the extraordinary subsidy imposed, from so urgent a necessity, on this tributary, was only one-fifth of his yearly rent; that he was extremely rich, and could well afford the addition, which was much less than his former superior, or any other native chief acting upon the discretionary principles of Asiatic governments, would have exacted. Even after paying the demand, he was not in a worse, but in a better situation as the tenant of the company, than that in which he would have been as the tenant of Oude, or any other oriental state. The rajah baffled the demands by repeated evasions, and at this time (the beginning of 1781), when the possessions of the company were in the greatest danger, and her want of assistance both in men and money most urgent, Cheyt Sing much more

A subsidy is granted with great reluctance.

Hastings repeats his demand.

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more manifestly displayed his reluctance to contribute aid than in preceding years.[k] All the countries adjoining the rajah's territories were either openly or secretly engaged in the combination; from that circumstance, together with the rajah's unwillingness to support the cause of the company, the governor-general suspected Cheyt Sing to be connected with the hostile confederacy. Various accounts, both from English residents at Benares and the neighbouring countries, confirmed the suspicion. Mr. Hastings now being extremely straitened from want of money for paying the company's troops and other services, and farther desirous of exploring the intentions and designs both of the rajah and others who professed amity, resolved to make a progress into the upper country. Impressed with an opinion of the rajah's culpability, the governor-general had privately resolved that, if on examination he found him really hostile, the punishment of treacherous designs to injure the company should be such a fine as would relieve their present exigencies. Accordingly he proceeded to Benares: the rajah met him on the frontiers, expressed his complete submission, made protestations of the most zealous fidelity and attachment to the company, and declared that his zemindary and all his possessions were the gift of the company, and at their command. Mr. Hastings, little moved with these general professions of friendship, after arriving at Benares, made specific charges of infidelity and disaffection to the English government from which he held his zemindary; of internal tyranny and oppression, contrary to the tenure of his vassalage; and of evasion respecting the payment of subsidies. The rajah denied these charges, and endeavoured to refute them, but not to the governor's satisfaction: to make him more compliant, he put Cheyt Sing under an arrest. The

Hastings proceeds to Benares to enforce compliance.

[k] See Annual Register, 1783, c. i.; and Thompson's War in Asia.

inhabitants

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inhabitants of Benares rushed in great numbers upon a small party of two companies which guarded Sing's person, cut them to pieces, and rescued the rajah. The governor himself was in considerable danger, having but a small body of attendants in the midst of a hostile multitude. Finding the disorderly spirit of the people, he sent for troops from different quarters to come to Benares; the rajah fled to a distant place of refuge, from thence he sent a suppliant letter, to which Mr. Hastings made no answer. A war broke out in Benares; the governor soon subdued that country, and took possession of the treasures of the rajah. Immense sums were found in his treasury, which proved that his excuses of poverty were totally unfounded. Cheyt Sing published a manifesto addressed to other rajahs, in which he attempted to justify himself, and stir up his neighbours against the British name, and immediately afterwards retired into banishment.

Conduct of Cheyt Sing's people.

He flies from Benares.

Mr. Hastings considering this insurrection at Benares as a rebellion, deemed it part of the great combination against British India. It appeared to him that Cheyt Sing had been warmly supported by the neighbouring province of Oude, especially in the countries that were governed by the begums, or dowager princesses, who according to the customs of India, had, for the support of their widowhood, the investiture of certain demesnes and treasures under the name of jaghires. The begums of Oude were the mother and grand-mother of the reigning prince. The nabob came down to Chunar, with the professed intention of paying his respects to the governor-general, accompanied with a considerable number of troops; Mr. Hastings by no means approved of this visit, he had no occasion for the nabob for quelling the commotions in Benares, and was not without suspicions of the treachery so incidental to the feeble and timid characters of oriental despotism; not, however, chusing to communicate

Alleged disaffection and machinations of the begums.

to

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to the nabob his distrust; he expressed his acknowledgments for his kind attention, and at Chunar they met. Mr. Hastings being well informed of the proceedings of the begums, consulted with sir Elijah Impey, whether, they being in actual rebellion, the nabob might not confiscate their property; sir Elijah answered in the affirmative.' Fortified with this authority, Mr. Hastings appeared to entertain no doubt of the legality of the principle; but it was necessary to the purposes of equity and justice to examine the fact; in this investigation he requested the assistance of the judge, who undertook to collect testimonies, and the result was, that the begums had abetted the rebellion of Cheyt Sing. Having ascertained this fact to his satisfaction, and also that they were hostile to the government of the nabob himself, he entered into a treaty with that prince; one article of which was, that as great distress had arisen to the nabob's government, from the military power and dominion assumed by the begums, he should be permitted to resume such of their lands as he might deem to be necessary. As the nabob acknowledged a great debt to the company, the proceeds of the confiscation were to be applied to liquidate that demand, and consequently to increase the pecuniary resources of the company when supplies were so much wanted. The nabob having returned to Oude, and not having immediately proceeded to the forfeiture stipulated in the treaty, was strongly urged not only to seize a part, but the whole of the effects as confiscated in consequence of the rebellion: that prince at last enforced the act, and dispossessed the begums of all their treasures.[1] Such was the procedure of Hastings respecting Cheyt Sing and the begums, which the narrator considers, with its ostensible reasons, as part of the series of British affairs in India that it is his duty to

At the instance of Mr. Hastings, their treasures are confiscated.

[1] Annual Register, 1783, chap. i.

relate,

relate, though he conceives it unnecessary to canvass all the assertions and attempted arguments, all the replies and attempted refutations, that arose from this subject. Leaving the moral rectitude and judicial legality of Mr. Hastings's conduct with the appropriate tribunal by which it has been already discussed, the history proceeds to the political effects of the expedition. It afforded the company the means of paying their troops, increasing their resources, and redoubling their exertions against the combined enemies. It prevented the native powers from effectually joining the confederacy, and served also to detach one important sovereign, Moodejee Scindia, the Mahratta prince, from the alliance. A peace was concluded in October 1781, between him and Mr. Hastings [m]; so that, on the whole, the measures of Mr. Hastings, at this time, very essentially served the British cause.

Mr. Hastings detaches the Mahratta prince from the confederacy of native powers.

THE French, we have seen, had formed expectations of ruining the British interests, through themselves and the confederacies which they instigated in the eastern as well as the western world; and with that view sent a squadron with a powerful body of forces, under monsieur Suffrein to India. Sailing from the cape of Good Hope, Suffrein joined monsieur de Orves at the island of Mauritius: the French commander, with a fleet of ten ships of the line, one fifty-gun ship, several large frigates, and a multitude of transports and store-vessels, having on board a numerous body of land forces, sailed in January 1782, for the coast of Coromandel: M. de Orves dying on the passage, the sole command of the fleet devolved on M. de Suffrein. A British convoy, under general Meadows, was proceeding with troops for India, and two ships of the line and two fifties; the Hannibal, one of the latter, was taken by the enemy; but the rest of the fleet reached Madras,

Suffrein expects to crush the British naval force;

[m] Annual Register, 1783. c. i.; and Thomson's War in Asia.

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the place of their destination. On the 31st of January sir Edward Hughes was obliged to sail from Trincomale for Madras, to procure a supply of stores and provisions, and refit his ships. At his arrival, on the 8th of February, he was informed by lord Macartney, the new governor, that a French armament amounting to thirty sail had been seen on the coast, and was supposed not to be above twenty leagues to the northward. Admiral Hughes had only six ships of the line, with the crews in a very indifferent condition, when he was the following day reinforced by the two ships of the line and one of fifty guns, which were just arrived from England. Sir Eyre Coote with great alacrity and expedition assisted him in manning his ships from the land forces; and having now his stores and provisions on board, on the 15th of February he saw the French fleet bearing directly to Madras, with ten sail of the line, two fifties, and six frigates. Suffrein had expected to find only six English ships of the line, and hastened, in all the vivacity of French fancy, hoping to overpower the English fleet, and thereby cooperate so effectually with Hyder Ally as to reduce Madras; and by a little farther extension of the imagination, anticipated the speedy ruin of British India. The pleasing reverie of Suffrein met with a disagreeable interruption in the view of nine ships of war prepared to obstruct his progress: on this discovery he immediately stopped, and soon after drew off his fleet to the southward.[n] Admiral Hughes immediately followed, and the next day descried the French ships of war to the eastward: while the convoy escorted by frigates was steering south towards Pondicherry, the British admiral threw out a signal for chase, with the double view of capturing the convoy and inducing the French admiral to return to attempt their relief. In the

is disappointed.

[n] Annual Register, 1783.

course

course of the pursuit the British ships retook five English prizes with their crews and cargoes, and captured a sixth, that proved to be a very important advantage: she was a large French transport of thirteen hundred tons, containing a considerable train of artillery and a great quantity of gunpowder and other military stores for Hyder Ally, with three hundred soldiers on board. Meanwhile the French fleet endeavouring to assist the convoy, obliged the British admiral to recal the chasers; and having ordered the prizes to be sent to Negapatam, he prepared to form the line of battle. On the 17th of February, early in the morning, the admiral threw out the signal for forming in a compact order, so as to prevent the enemy from profiting by their superiority; but the weather was extremely unfavourable to the collection of his ships. The enemy perceiving the British squadron, notwithstanding every effort of both commander and officers, to be still dispersed, attacked the rear, while the rest were by a calm prevented from taking a share in the action. The British ships that were engaged were much shattered, and in danger of being entirely wrecked, when a favourable wind rising, enabled the others to bear down on the enemy with force and effect, but darkness intervening prevented the battle; and during the night the French fleet sailed away to the north-east. In this unequal contest, though the event was not decisive, two English captains were killed; Stevens of the Superb, and Reynolds of the Exeter; and these two ships were so much damaged, that Hughes found it necessary to proceed to Trincomale for repairs. There he expected to meet a convoy with troops and stores from England, which he intended to escort to Madras: he however found only part of the convoy; but was joined by two seventy-four gun ships. Having refitted his squadron, he coasted southwards, and, on the 8th of April, saw the French fleet

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Various conflicts between him and sir Edward Hughes.

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to the north-east, but at a considerable distance: in three days he arrived off the coast of Ceylon. The enemy meanwhile having gained the wind, and knowing the bay to be extremely rocky, resolved to attack the British under the disadvantage of a lee-shore and a very dangerous road; and on the 12th of April, forming their line with superior numbers, favourable wind, and situation, they prepared for the onset. The English admiral under these disadvantages arrayed his fleet; the battle began about noon; both sides fought with great fury; and the French finding, notwithstanding their multiplied advantages, they could make no impression on the British, drew off their ships. Although these actions were not decisive, yet they proved very beneficial to the British. Hyder Ally had entered the Carnatic in full reliance that the naval force of France would crush the English, that thereby he should capture Madras, depose the nabob of Arcot, and place his son Tippoo in his stead. Expecting the promised and destined squadron, he had with the prospects of 1782 consoled himself for the disappointments of 1781; but on finding the French with so great a superiority of numbers repeatedly retiring, he began to be convinced of the vast superiority of British prowess, and to despair of accomplishing his favourite objects. The other Indian powers received the same impression in a greater degree, and became less disposed to hostilities, which they now apprehended would be ultimately unavailing.

though not decisive, prove favorable to the British interests.

Sir Eyre Coote's plan of the campaign was to divert Hyder's force into detached operations, while he himself pressing on him with the main army, should oblige him to evacuate the Carnatic. Major Abingdon at the beginning of the year arrived in Tillicherry, then blockaded by a considerable part of Hyder's troops; by a bold and well-conducted sally, he entirely defeated the Mysorean, and compelled

Campaign of sir Eyre Coote against Hyder Ally.

him

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him to raise the blockade and retreat from the coast. Another British detachment was stationed to protect Tanjore, to repress the designs of Hyder Ally and the French on that side of Pondicherry, and to co-operate from the south with the main army. This body, consisting of two thousand foot and two hundred and fifty horse, commanded by colonel Braithwaite, was posted on the river Coleroon; and in consequence of the recent defeat of Hyder's troops at Tillicherry, was not apprehensive that the enemy would approach the sea-coast. Tippoo Saib, understanding the security of the English detachment, formed a plan for surprising and surrounding the corps, with about four hundred French and twenty thousand native troops. He was but too successful, and though the British force made the most skilful and gallant resistance, they were overpowered by numbers. The humanity of the French commander saved the remains of the British troops from being massacred by Tippoo's barbarians; but those who survived the defeat were obliged to undergo the miseries of a long and cruel imprisonment. By this disaster the southern parts of the Carnatic were exposed, and the arrival of a considerable body of French troops from the Mauritius made the state of the English more critical. These forces, joined by a numerous body from Mysore, besieged Cuddalore, and soon compelled it to capitulate; while Hyder Ally watched the motions of sir Eyre Coote. After this capture they made an attempt upon Vandiwash. Sir Eyre Coote marched to its relief, both to protect an important post, and in the hopes that Hyder Ally, trusting to the efficacy of his European auxiliaries, would hazard a battle; the Mysorean, however, cautiously avoided an engagement, and relinquishing Vandiwash, retired backwards two days march, and posted himself in a very strong situation at a place called Redhill. General Coote pursued him thither, attacked him on the 2d of June, defeated him,

Colonel Braithwaite's corps surprised and defeated by Tippoo Saib.

Signal victory of sir Eyre Coote at Redhill.

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him, put his troops to the route, killed great numbers, and would have gained a much more decisive victory had he possessed cavalry to pursue the fugitives. The battle of the 2d of June obliged the enemy to retire far into the interior country, and completed the discomfiture of Hyder's designs. This aspiring adventurer, with a comprehensiveness of genius, a firmness and magnanimity of mind, not unworthy of the highest European capacity and heroism, had projected to become master of the Indian empire; and for that purpose, to make tools of the French and native powers, in a confederacy for expelling the English, the great obstacles to the accomplishment of the lofty projects of his ambition. In the scenes of his personal enterprise, he and his European auxiliaries were counteracted and baffled by British prowess directed by the skill and abilities of a Hughes and a Coote, while in the more distant regions of his political operations, he had to contend with the penetrating sagacity, profound and powerful genius, of a Hastings. He was already apprised of the successful efforts of the governor-general in impairing the confederacy, by reducing disaffected allies, and persuading opposing states to a separate peace. He was apprehensive that the same energetic character would finish the enmity of other powers, and that the force of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, might ultimately be exerted against Mysore alone. These disappointments of past hopes and fears of future evils preyed on the mind of Hyder Ally, affected his health, and spread a languor over his subsequent measures and actions; he withdrew to his capital, where some months after he died. The constitution of sir Eyre Coote was so greatly affected by the fatigues which he had undergone, that he was unable to keep the field any longer; he therefore retired to Madras, leaving the command to major-general Stuart. The enemy cautiously abstaining from battle, and the British commander

Hyder Ally completely discomfited.

His death.

Worn out by fatigue, sir Eyre Coote resigns the command.

commander not being able to compel an engagement, no event of much importance happened by land during the rest of the campaign. The French fleet having refitted in the island of Ceylon, returned to the coast of Coromandel; and understanding that a reinforcement was daily expected to join the English squadron, sailed to Negapatam before the supplies should arrive. Hughes, immediately on descrying the foe, formed his line of battle; the contest began; the enemy were thrown into disorder; several of their ships were greatly disabled, and they expected a complete defeat, when an unfavourable wind prevented the British from reaping the fruits of the victory, or retarding the retreat of the French. During the battle, a French ship of the line struck her colours, but afterwards, in defiance of the established laws of war and of nations, when the British ship trusted to the surrender of her antagonist, fired into her; and the unfavourable wind unfortunately kept the British captain from punishing the infamous treachery. Suffrein retired to Cuddalore to refit: fresh troops having arrived from France, with two more ships of the line, he with his fleet and land forces sailed to Trincomale, which they took by surprise. Both sir Eyre Coote and sir Edward Hughes were very anxious for the preservation of this important possession, and the admiral immediately sailed to its relief. A fourth naval action took place; in which the English, though still inferior in force, after a very hard-fought battle, again compelled the enemy to retreat with great loss of men, and their ships very much disabled. This was the last conflict between the two fleets in the campaign of 1782.

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In northern India, Mr. Hastings was successfully engaged in detaching powers from the hostile combination. Having by colonel Muir concluded a peace with Moodajee Scindia, he procured the mediation of that chieftain to negociate a treaty with the

Hastings succeeds in putting an end to the Indian confederacy.

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Mahrattas, which was concluded by Mr. Anderson as envoy of the governor-general and council. The Mahrattas engaged to suffer no Europeans but the English to establish factories on their coasts; to have no intercourse with any others, except the Portuguese anciently settled in those countries, and to join in compelling the prince of Mysore to restore whatever possessions he had wrested from the English, or their allies.

Operations of sir Edward Hughes.

Sir Edward Hughes having returned to Madras, was exposed to great danger from a hurricane: fortunately his fleet escaped without loss, but much damage was suffered by mercantile ships. The larger part of the crop of rice being destroyed, produced a famine which cut off great numbers of the natives; but the vigilant attention of the governor-general and the council of Calcutta tended powerfully to alleviate the calamity. There being no naval dock on the coast of Coromandel, sir Edward Hughes sailed round to Bombay, to be thoroughly repaired: there he was joined by the long expected squadron under sir Richard Bickerton. The councils of Calcutta and Bombay, now freed from the Mahratta war, directed their views to Tippoo Saib, and proposed to make a powerful diversion on the Malabar coast. To enable the government of Bombay to carry on war with vigour and effect, the supreme council sent them fifteen lacks of rupees from the treasury of Calcutta, which was now by the policy of Mr. Hastings well supplied; and, instead of wanting money for that settlement itself, was able to assist the other presidencies.

Expedition against Mysore, from the Malabar coast.

In the close of 1782, colonel Humberstown, with a considerable body of troops, was dispatched to the Malabar coast; and after having made progress in the maritime parts, ventured to penetrate into the interior country, where he was repulsed with loss, closely pursued, and involved in a very dangerous situation. Tippoo Saib, informed that

the

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the British commander was so far advanced, hastened after him, but Humberstown by forced marches reached Paniary, where colonel Macleod was just arrived from Madras with a body of troops. Tippoo Saib immediately followed, and invested the town, of which Macleod, as elder officer, took the command: the bravery of the British compelled Tippoo to raise the siege, and he returned with great expedition to the Carnatic. General Matthews having been sent from Bombay to the relief of colonel Humberstown, received on his way intelligence of Tippoo Saib's discomfiture and retreat. Encouraged by this information, he attacked the city of Onore, the capital of Bednore (called also Canara); he took it by storm, nor was he able to prevent the outrages incidental to that mode of capture. Matthews penetrated into the country, took other towns and fortresses by assault, and though the detail of his operations be not accurately known, yet it would appear from the general outlines communicated to the public, that very unnecessary, and consequently very unjustifiable cruelties were committed. About this time died sir Eyre Coote, who had rendered such very important services to the British interests in India. Having found the company's fortune at Madras at the lowest ebb in 1781, he, with a very inferior force, that year effectually checked the progress of the Indian conqueror; and in the next, entirely overthrew his projects. He indeed, seconded by sir Edward Hughes, may be considered as the immediate military saviour of the Carnatic, in co-operation with Mr. Hastings, the political saviour of India.

Death of sir Eyre Coote, the military saviour of India.

Hastings the political saviour.

Sir Edward Hughes arrived at Madras with his fleet in April 1783, and on the 2d of May set sail in quest of the enemy. His strength was considerably weakened by sickness; they, however, sought an action with the enemy, who gave them battle on the 20th of June, in which the French, having the advantage

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advantage of the wind prevented a close engagement. Sir Edward Hughes returned for supplies and provisions to Madras; but before he was ready to sail again, intelligence arrived from Europe which stopped his intended operations.

Tippoo Saib surprises general Matthews.

TIPPOO Sultan [o] having surprised, and by superior numbers overpowered Matthews's band, and retaken some of the towns which that general had captured, turned the siege of the rest into a blockade. General Stuart, now commander in the Carnatic, made it his chief object to expel the French, who were reinforced by a fresh body of soldiers under the marquis de Bussy, and assisted by a detachment of Tippoo's troops. After he had evacuated Mysore himself with his main army, he sent colonels Long and Fullerton to invade the southern parts of Tippoo's dominions; and these commanders overran the whole Coimbatour country. The French were strongly fortified at Cuddalore: this town Stuart determined to besiege; and having spent the month of May in making preparations, he marched in the beginning of June. On the 7th, seconded admirably by all his officers and soldiers, and natives, he carried the out-works of the enemy; some days after, repulsed a very vigorous and well-conducted sally, and made such approaches as were likely to ensure success, when orders from Europe put a stop to hostilities.

Further operations stopped by intelligence from Europe.

Europe. Siege of Minorca by a great armament.

THE first scene of warlike operations in Europe, in the year 1782, was Minorca. The Spaniards had made very great preparations to recover this ancient possession: thither were sent sixteen thousand land forces, with a train of artillery, consisting of one hundred and nine pieces of the heaviest cannon, and thirty-six great mortars. The English garrison amounted to only two thousand six hundred and ninety-two men; and the whole force of Britain was

[o] He assumed the title of Sultan on the death of his father. See Annual Register, 1783.

so appropriated to various services, that no addition could be spared for the relief of Minorca. The fortress was, in some respects very strong, but its works were so numerous and extensive, as to require at least six thousand men for effectual defence, so that the present number was totally inadequate. Notwithstanding the vast advantage possessed by the enemy, their king endeavoured to increase it by instigating treachery; a bribe was offered to the governor, general Murray: the gallant veteran treated the attempt with the generous indignation of a man of integrity and honour, solicited to become a villain. The enemy finding their insidious proffers rejected with merited scorn, proceeded to invest St. Philip's. In August 1781, they had cut off all communication between the fort and the country; and though there was no want of other provisions, they were debarred from supplies of vegetables. This privation was the more severely felt, as they were obliged to live on salted meats: the scurvy soon began to rage, and was accompanied by a putrid fever, which carried off great numbers of the garrison, while others were daily falling by the cannonade of the enemy. Notwithstanding these multiplied evils, the defenders displayed the utmost valour and constancy, and made several successful sallies. Though by their artillery they daily impaired the numbers of the British, the enemy employed five months in constructing their works. In the beginning of February, the garrison was so much reduced by sickness, that there were only six hundred and sixty men left who were in any degree fit for duty; and of these, all but one hundred were so far tainted with the scurvy, that the physicians and surgeons declared they could hold out only a very few days before they must be sent to the hospital; they likewise affirmed, that longer perseverance in defence must prove the inevitable destruction of the remains of that brave garrison.

There

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There was, they said, no possible remedy for the sick, nor means even of keeping the greater part of them much longer alive, but by a speedy relief of wholesome air, aided by an abundant supply of vegetables. It was also apprehended that the enemy, knowing the weakness of the garrison, would now, that their works were finished, attempt to carry it by assault. From all these considerations, the governor thought it necessary to capitulate, and obtained the most honourable terms.

After a gallant defence the garrison capitulates, Feb. 5th.

Fleets of France, Spain, and Holland.

MEANWHILE preparations were making on both sides for the naval campaign. The armaments which France, Spain, and Holland, had equipped to act against Great Britain on the European seas, contained seventy ships of the line. As our force for the home service was very inferior to the fleets of the enemy if united, the object of the first importance was to prevent their junction, and weaken them by separate attacks: the second was to protect our numerous convoys, without departing so far as to leave our coasts unguarded; and the third, to relieve Gibraltar. On the 13th of April, admiral Barrington, with twelve ships of the line and several frigates, sailed towards the bay of Biscay. On the 20th, he descried a fleet, that proved to be a convoy destined for the East Indies, to supply the loss incurred by the dispersion and capture of the former transports. They had sailed from Brest only the day before, escorted by the Protecteur and Pegase of seventy-four guns, the Actionaire of sixty-four, and a frigate. The British admiral having made a signal for general chase, captain Jervis, of the Foudroyant of seventy-four guns, so far out-stripped the rest during the night, that in the morning he was out of sight of the fleet. The French commander ordering the convoy to disperse, and the Protecteur having a large sum of money on board, it was agreed that the other two ships should keep the enemy employed, while she made the best of her

Admiral Barrington intercepts a French convoy destined for the East Indies.

Exploit of captain Jervis

her way. In a short time captain Jervis overtook the Pegase, both ships were fresh from the harbour, and were nearly equal in force. A very fierce action ensued, in which, notwithstanding the most valiant efforts of the enemy, British seamanship and discipline so completely prevailed, as that near a hundred of the French were killed, and a much greater number wounded; though not one Briton was killed, and but very few wounded: after a conflict of an hour, the French ship surrendered. The Pegase being extremely disabled, captain Maitland of the Queen took her in charge, while the Foudroyant proceeded in the chase. Captain Maitland having taken three hundred of the prisoners out of the Pegase, sent lieutenant Bisset with a party on board to guard the rest, and take direction of the prize. Immediately after, a French ship of war appeared, which he understood to be the Protecteur, he ordered the lieutenant with a cutter that was in company, to conduct the Pegase into an English port, while he himself, incumbered as he was with prisoners, pursued the enemy. A chase of fourteen hours brought him up with the Frenchman, when, after the first broadside, she, to his great surprise, struck her colours, and proved to be the Actionaire, having on board two hundred and fifty seamen, and five hundred and fifty soldiers. The other pursuers were also successful, and took twelve ships of the convoy, having on board about a thousand soldiers. After this very successful cruize, extremely boisterous weather obliged the admiral to return to port, where he arrived in the end of the month. Captain Jervis was immediately after made a knight of the bath, an honour destined to be prelusive to a more splendid mark of his sovereign's favour, earned by the exertion of the same heroic qualities on a much wider field. Intelligence being received that the Dutch fleet was preparing to come out of the Texel, lord Howe sailed with twelve ships of the line to the

coast

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coast of Holland, either to intercept or confine the enemy; but finding they were not disposed to venture to the North Seas, and that the combined fleets of France and Spain had set sail, he returned to join admiral Kempenfeldt at Portsmouth. In the beginning of June, Guichen, who had been some months stationed at Cadiz, and don Louis de Cordova, sailed with twenty-five ships of the line, and in their progress northward were joined by about twenty more. With this mighty force, steering to the channel, they intercepted part of a Newfoundland convoy; but the most valuable portion, together with the escorting ships of war, escaped. The enemy being now in the mouth of the channel, great apprehensions were entertained concerning a homeward-bound fleet of merchantmen from Jamaica, protected by only three ships of the line, under sir Peter Parker. Lord Howe sailed in the beginning of July, accompanied by the admirals Barrington, sir John Lockart Ross, and Kempenfeldt. This fleet amounted to no more than twenty-two sail of the line: therefore the object was to receive the Jamaica fleet, and baffle the attempts of the enemy, without being forced to an engagement with so very superior an armament. The abilities and professional skill of this great man, so well seconded, very dexterously and completely accomplished these purposes. The combined fleets neither intercepted our trade, nor could effect a junction with the Dutch; and, finding they could derive no advantage from continuing in the channel, retired from our coasts. The British fleet having returned to Portsmouth, an accidental calamity befel one of our ships, involving in it circumstances that caused a deep concern throughout the nation. While other ships were receiving some necessary repairs, the Royal George of one hundred guns was found to require a slight species of careen, which can be executed by laying a vessel, in a certain degree, on her side, without the

Combined fleets sail to the channel.

Disappointed, they return southward.

Loss of the Royal George, and admiral Kempenfeldt.

the trouble and delay of taking her into dock. On the 29th of August this business was undertaken; the ship was crowded with people from the shore, especially about three hundred women, besides about nine hundred of the crew. The carpenters had moved the ship a kreake more on her side than was intended; when, about ten o'clock in the morning, a sudden squall arising, threw her fatally upon her side, and her gun-ports being open, and the motion of the cannon increasing the violence of the shock, she was almost instantly filled with water, and went to the bottom. The admiral, with a considerable number of his officers, and about nine hundred of the crew and visitors, perished at this melancholy moment. The Royal George was the largest and strongest ship in the British navy; had been the seat of command under most of our distinguished admirals, especially lord Hawke, in his celebrated battle with Conflans. Admiral Kempenfeldt[p] was very eminent for professional science, knowledge, and judgment, and deemed unrivalled in the art of manœuvring; being besides amiable and estimable as a man, he was universally lamented.

Having protected our coasts and our trade, and prevented the junction of the Bourbon fleets with the Dutch, Britain now directed her naval attention to the relief of Gibraltar. From the surrender of Minorca, the king of Spain hoped the key of the Mediterranean would be the next acquisition. The duke de Crillon, a French nobleman, who had commanded at Minorca, undertook the supreme conduct of the siege: he was assisted by a great number of the best officers of both countries, and particularly of the most skilful engineers and artillerists of his own. An immense increase of land and sea forces was brought both from France and Spain to aid the troops already before Gibraltar; and many of the

Renewed preparations against Gibraltar.

[p] He was son to colonel Kempenfeldt, exhibited by the Spectator under the name of captain Sentry.

nobility

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nobility from both countries came to serve as volunteers. Two princes of the blood royal of France, one of them the king's own brother, the count d'Artois, sought glory by combating the brave British garrison and its illustrious commander. In the spirit of loyalty which was then diffused through the French soldiers, the presence of their princes excited an enthusiastic desire of distinguishing themselves before so adored witnesses: the same spirit pervaded the Spaniards, and both became impatient for action. The besiegers had prepared new and extraordinary machines; battering-ships, which, though of an astonishing bulk, could go through all their evolutions with the ease and dexterity of frigates. Twelve hundred pieces of heavy ordnance were to play from land and sea, besides a large floating battery, and five bomb-ketches. The land and naval troops by which these operations were to be carried on, amounted to forty thousand men, besides the combined fleet of fifty ships of the line, that was to cover and support the attack. While dispositions were making for so tremendous an assault, the besiegers amused themselves with calculations of the exact time in which Gibraltar would be taken; some said the garrison would hold out twelve hours after the onset commenced; other, less sanguine, thought it would last sixteen; and some, though very few, allowed even twenty-four for the completion of the conquest.[q]

Enemy's battering-ships,

large army and fleet.

The besiegers calculate that twenty-four hours would reduce Gibraltar.

Elliot anticipates their attack:

ELLIOT, without precisely knowing what the inventions of the enemy were, had a general idea that their dispositions were both mighty and extraordinary, and with comprehensive wisdom and magnanimity prepared against every species of attack. Perceiving their works on the land side to be nearly completed, he determined to try how far a

pours red-hot balls on their batteries:

[q] Annual Register, 1782, p. 232.

vigorous

vigorous cannonade and bombardment with red-hot balls, carcasses, and shells, might operate to their destruction. On the 8th of September, at seven in the morning, he commenced a firing so powerful, and so admirably directed, as to commit considerable devastation on the enemy's works. Enraged at this loss, the besiegers hurried on their grand attack. On the 13th of September, this tremendous operation commenced both by sea and land; the various parts being very skilfully adjusted, their batteries appeared to have prodigious effect; their battering-ships especially, so formidable for offence, during several hours seemed exquisitely adapted for defence, and invulnerable to the red-hot balls that were pouring from the garrison. The execution of these terrible instruments, though not instantaneous, was nevertheless effectual: about two o'clock, the admiral's ship was seen to issue smoke, at night she was in flames, and several others on fire; soon afterwards the conflagration was general over the battering-ships, and the sole endeavours of the enemy were exerted in saving the men. The small naval force employed in the garrison of Gibraltar, was commanded by captain Curtis; that brave officer and his sailors had, in the preceding attacks from the garrison, performed very difficult and important services by land; now an opportunity occurred for exerting themselves on their own element. During the confusion and distress of the enemy hurrying from the burning battering-ships, captain Curtis, with twelve gun-boats, flanked their line, raked them on one side, whilst the garrison was destroying them from another. The Spanish boats durst no longer attempt to assist the battering-ships: and, when daylight appeared, the assailants who had been stationed on those were seen perishing in the flames, or, endeavouring to escape, overwhelmed by the opposite element. The British now seeing that they had completely destroyed those

again destroys their preparations and proves their hopes groundless.

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formidable batteries, with characteristic humanity endeavoured to rescue the remainder of their defenders; and captain Curtis and his gallant band, through great danger to themselves, saved the lives of about four hundred. Such was the signal and complete defensive victory obtained by a comparatively small handful of heroes, over the combined efforts and united powers by sea and land, of two great, warlike, and potent nations, who, sparing no expence nor exertion of art for the attainment of a favourite object, exceeded all former examples as well in the magnitude as the formidable nature of their preparations. The enemy being so totally disappointed in their sanguine expectations of taking this fortress by assault, now rested their sole hopes on the resumption of blockade, by preventing lord Howe from bringing the expected ammunition and provisions. They professed ardently to wish for the arrival of the British fleet, and assured themselves of compensating their direful disasters by brilliant victory. On the 9th of October a violent storm dispersed the combined armament, and exposed them to imminent danger. Lord Howe having been retarded by contrary winds, did not arrive at the straits until the 11th of October: during the night a considerable part of the fleet having missed the bay of Gibraltar, entered the Mediterranean, and the next day the admiral followed to assemble the scattered ships, having left the Buffalo of sixty guns to collect the store-ships as they arrived in the bay, and also the Panther of the same force in the straits. On the 13th the combined fleet passed the straits with about forty-seven ships of the line, three of their men of war having been disabled by the tempest, and discovered lord Howe with thirty-two ships of the line off the coast of Grenada; next morning, however, they were out of sight. The British admiral now sailing westward, sent his convoy safe into Gibraltar;

They again attempt a blockade.

Lord Howe attempts to supply and relieve Gibraltar:

effects his purpose in the face of a

Gibraltar; it contained a reinforcement of troops, with plentiful supplies of ammunition and provisions of every sort for the garrison. The enemy did not make their appearance until after this great object of the expedition was completely effected. On the 19th of October, when lord Howe, being joined by the Buffalo and Panther, was with thirty-four ships entering into the gut of Gibraltar, he descried the enemy sailing from the north-east towards the straits, with the wind blowing fair from the Mediterranean. He thought it would be extremely imprudent, with so inferior a force, to hazard an engagement in a dangerous road, well known to the enemy, but not to his fleet; he therefore proceeded to the open ocean. On the 21st of October, he descried the enemy following him at about five leagues to windward, and immediately formed a line of battle. The enemy having the wind in their favour, had their choice both of the time of action and the distance from which they should engage. At sun-set the combined fleets began a cannonade, which the British returned with such effect as to produce considerable damage, and to throw their antagonists into evident confusion. The French and Spanish admirals drew off their ships about ten at night; and in the morning they were seen at a great distance sailing away in the direction of Cadiz. Several considerations prevented lord Howe from pursuing the enemy; he had effected the principal purpose of his command in relieving Gibraltar; he had been ordered to dispatch eight of his ships, after the relief of the garrison, to the West Indies: the force of the enemy was so superior as to render the issue of a battle extremely doubtful; and even if he should succeed, he was to expect his ships to be so much damaged as to disable them from proceeding to the other destined services. Lord Howe was too wise to fight merely for the sake of battle, and to incur certain danger without any definite

much superior fleet.

He offers the enemy battle, which they decline.

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finite object. He therefore proceeded to England, where, after having on his way detached part of his fleet to the West Indies, he arrived in safety with the rest. Thus in the protection of her coasts and trade, preventing the junction of the Dutch with the Bourbon fleets, and the relief of Gibraltar, Britain effected the three great objects of the campaign 1782 in Europe. In the East and West Indies the schemes of our enemies had, as we have seen, proved equally abortive. A confederacy extending from the north sea to the Mediterranean, containing the three greatest naval states and almost all the maritime force of continental Europe, found their mighty efforts against the navy of England recoil on themselves.

General purpose of Bourbon ambition frustrated: Britain retains the sovereignty of the sea.

The belligerent powers are at length convinced that hostilities are reciprocally ruinous.

THE various contending parties at length began to see, that whatever partial advantages might be gained, the contest in which they were engaged tended to the general injury of all the belligerent powers. France had succeeded in separating the American colonies from Britain; but had been foiled in her principal purpose of obtaining naval and commercial supremacy. Her operations had been carried on at an enormous expence, which not only annihilated all the recent savings of her reforming economists, but infinitely exceeded her revenue, and overwhelmed her with new debt. The war which caused such unprecedented expenditure, had been far from producing any advantage likely to secure an eventual equivalent: her expectations of compensating present embarrassment, were becoming daily more hopeless. The confederacy in India was crumbling to pieces, and British superiority was again manifest: all her sanguine projects against the West Indies had fallen under the victorious arms of Rodney, and America, impoverished by her long and arduous struggle, was more likely to drain than to supply the treasure of her allies. Spain had engaged in the war as the tool of French ambition, which

which artfully playing on the weakness, personal prejudices, and vanity of the prince, dazzled him by splendid promises of Gibraltar and Jamaica, and thereby blinded him to his real interests, to which nothing could be more contrary than either the encouragement of revolt in American colonies or hostilities with England. All her mighty and costly preparations against Gibraltar had fallen under Elliot's red-hot balls. From Rodney her schemes against Jamaica received a decisive defeat, her hopes of naval and commercial aggrandizement through the depression of England had perished, her ships had been captured, and her fleets overthrown. In four years, all her extraordinary exertions, all her waste of blood and treasure had conquered a defenceless province[r], and captured an hospital.[s] America had succeeded in the contest, and attained the objects for which she fought; but she prevailed by efforts which drained her resources, by labours that required a respite as soon as it could be procured consistently with her public engagements. During her short warfare, Holland in the loss of her settlements, the seizure of her treasures, and the destruction of her trade, learned how dangerous it is for a state deriving its subsistence from commerce to provoke to war a neighbour that rules the ocean. Britain for the last five years had been engaged in a war to defend her maritime sovereignty; great as had been her collateral losses, she had on the whole maintained that grand object; but her defence, though manifesting her energy, had drained her resources; her expenditure was enormous, her debts and taxes had far exceeded the anticipation of even her most desponding politicians; trade was interrupted, difficulties and distress poignant and alarming; increasing demands appeared to portend the derangement of her finances, and the downfal of her credit.

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[r] West Florida. [s] Minorca.

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From all these circumstances it was the interest of each party separately, and all jointly, to conciliate peace.

Overtures for a general peace.

THE determination lately avowed by England to acknowledge the independence of America, removed the most ostensive obstacle to an accommodation, as the discomfiture of their designs dispelled the real objections of our European enemies. The empress of Russia and emperor of Germany, finding a pacificatory disposition in the belligerent powers, and that circumstances now admitted of its being carried into effect, offered themselves, and were accepted as mediators. Soon after lord Shelburne became prime minister, the British government had sent Mr. William Windham Grenville, brother to the earl of Temple, to Paris, to pave the way for opening a negociation in the proper form. These preliminaries being settled, Mr. Fitzherbert, envoy at Brussels, was appointed plenipotentiary to negociate and conclude a peace with the ministers of France, Spain, and Holland. He accordingly proceeded to Paris in the beginning of November; Mr. Oswald, a merchant, was likewise dispatched to the French metropolis, as commissioner from his Britannic Majesty, for treating of peace with John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Ray, and Henry Laurens, four of the commissioners nominated for the same purpose on the part of the united states of America. On the 30th of November, provisionary articles were signed as the grounds of future peace: by this treaty the freedom, sovereignty, and independence of the thirteen united states was individually by name, and in the fullest and most express terms acknowledged, and every claim to their government, property, and territorial rights for ever relinquished by the crown of Britain. To prevent all future disputes about boundaries, several lines were drawn, which it is unnecessary to follow with geographical minuteness; it is

The preliminary articles are signed.

The independence of America is acknowledged.

sufficient to say that Britain retained Canada and Nova Scotia; and acknowledged all the territory southwards to Georgia inclusive, westward to the Ohio and Mississippi, and eastwards to the Atlantic ocean, to be independent: to the united states, so defined, she granted an unlimited right of fishery on the banks of Newfoundland, in the gulph of St. Lawrence, and all other places where both nations had heretofore been accustomed to fish. American creditors were to recover fair debts in sterling money: congress engaged to recommend to the legislators to restore all estates, rights, and properties, belonging to real British subjects, which had been confiscated; also of other loyalists who had not borne arms against the united states, and to treat with mildness all descriptions of loyalists. Congress farther engaged, that after the conclusion of the treaty, there should be no future confiscations or prosecutions for having joined the British.

Treaties between Britain and the respective powers.

By the treaty with France, England extended the privilege of the French to fish on the banks of Newfoundland, and likewise ceded the Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon in full right to France, and consequently without any restriction in point of fortification. In the West Indies, England restored to France the island of St. Lucia; and ceded and guaranteed to her the island of Tobago. On the other hand, France restored to Britain, the island of Grenada, and the Grenadines, with St. Vincents, Dominica, St. Christophers, Nevis, and Montserrat. In Africa, England ceded to France the river of Senegal, with the forts and dependencies; and also the island of Goree. France guaranteed to England the river Gambia, and fort St. James. In India, England restored her acquisitions during the war; in return for which France, having made no conquest, could not give an equivalent in that country, and none was required in any other. In Europe, England agreed to the abrogation and suppression of all

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the articles relative to Dunkirk, from the treaty of peace concluded at Utrecht, in 1713, inclusively to the present time.

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By the treaty with Spain, Great Britain ceded not only Minorca and West Florida, but also East Florida; and Spain on her part restored to Britain the Bahama islands. The preliminaries between Britain and Holland were not immediately signed, but until these should be adjusted a suspension of arms was established. It was afterwards agreed that, with regard to the honours of the flag, the same custom should be respectively followed as was practised before the war; the captured ships from each nation should be restored; and there should be a general restoration of all places taken, except Negapatam, which was to continue in possession of his Britannic majesty until the Dutch should offer an equivalent. The Dutch engaged not to obstruct the navigation of British subjects on the eastern seas; and whereas disputes had risen between the African companies of the respective nations, it was agreed these should be referred to commissioners.

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The preliminaries between Britain, France, and America, were signed on or before the 21st of January 1783; and as an armistice, soon after followed by a treaty of peace, was at the same time established between Britain and Holland, we may from this time consider the war as finished.

General review of this arduous contest.

Thus ended the American war; in which all the nations that contended, however potent their exertions or brilliant their several successes, yet were very great sufferers by the events. The American colonies, indeed, so far succeeded in their object as to render themselves an independent and separate community. The real advantage to accrue from this dismemberment was problematical and contingent; to depend upon not only physical and moral causes, of which the operation and effect might be doubtful, but on a variety of circumstances

stances and incidents which could not possibly be foreseen. One fact they could experimentally ascertain; their revolutionary efforts had impoverished, devastated, and unpeopled the country. This was a notorious and glaring evil present, seen, and felt; the good was doubtful, and hitherto to be found only in anticipating imagination. Waving the question of abstract right, and considering only expediency, concerning the resistance of the Americans situated as they had been relatively to the mother-country; policy and prudence could justify their repugnance to the acts of the British government, only on the supposition that these tended to change their former happy situation, and to deprive them of their rights as freemen and British subjects. In this case, refusal to comply would not be a measure of choice, but to generous and magnanimous minds a dictate of necessity. There not only might be, but were many who conceived the Americans driven to hostilities at first, yet censured the unaccommodating spirit which refused the proffers of returning amity; and lamented the separation between children of the same origin. Britain was a greater loser by this contest than by any in which she had ever been engaged: thirteen provinces, before the unhappy dispute rapidly increasing not only their own prosperity, but the individual and national wealth, the defensive and offensive force of the parent state, were severed from it for ever. Through her quarrel with America, Britain had been involved in a complication of the most expensive and formidable wars; and a few years, nearly doubling her burthens, almost equalled the cost of a century. So far were these enormous sums from being expended in the reasonable hope of future indemnification, that they were a sacrifice of a great part of the public capital to preserve the existence of the nation. Heretofore Britain had fought for victory, now she contended for

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for bare life; but all her dangers, difficulties, and distresses from the European confederacy had their origin in the contest with the American colonies; and here impartial history, without either impugning or supporting the alleged right of the Americans to tax themselves, justifying or condemning the policy of the principle and mode of asserting that right, must exhibit one general series of facts, tending to impeach the wisdom of British counsels; *every coërcive measure, from the stamp-act downwards, produced a directly contrary effect to that which its abettors sought and proposed.* The only soothing and conciliatory schemes adopted before the rupture, the plans of the marquis of Rockingham and lord North, in 1766 and 1770, in a great degree removed the evils which projects of imperious exaction had generated through most of the colonies; they restored the harmony which imperious dictation had disturbed; and the repeal of imposts reproduced that revenue which attempted taxation destroyed. Thus experience the most recent afforded strong reasons to conclude, that, to preserve the attachment of America, and profit by her industry, prosperity, and riches, the imposition of taxes must be laid aside. Strong, and general, and uniform, as the colonial expression of repugnance to taxation had been, and was, the British ministers conceived a notion that it was confined to the influence of a few factious demagogues[t]: such reports indeed they received from their own partial and interested adherents; on these they acted in the face of the plainest evidence of universal association; which to abhorrence of British taxation sacrificed every predilection of taste and habit for British commodities; and manifested individual, corporate, and confederate reprobation, both in word and deed, of pecuniary contribution without their own consent. Ministers still thought that the majo-

[t] See vol. ii. passim.

rity

rity of the colonies was favourable to British impost. And here it must be admitted, that the abettors of the project as a scheme of beneficial policy, with the means of being thoroughly informed, were really ignorant of the state of the case concerning which they professed to reason and to plan. Originating in misapprehension, their conclusions were false, and their measures unwise and pernicious. The most partial admirers of lord North's administration would find it impossible to prove, or even plausibly to contend, that his schemes respecting America were founded in adequate knowledge, just deduction, or wise policy. But his enemies on the other hand must allow, though the propositions might be his, the enactment belonged to the whole legislature. The same imperfect information that marked the senatorial motions of ministers affected also their executorial plans and directions. In addition to their favourite theory of the general attachment of the Americans to British supremacy, they adopted another hypothesis, that the colonists were cowards. On this speculation they formed their military arrangements, and to repress hostile resistance sent a very inadequate force. Their tardy projects of partial conciliation, and retained coërcion, encouraged colonial confidence, without removing disaffection and resentment.

When war was inevitable, or at least could be avoided but by such concessions only as they deemed it incompatible with honour and duty to grant, its management became the object of consideration. Here the censure bestowed upon ministry so lavishly, after the first campaign, admits considerable modifications. The armies sent, and generals employed, afforded a moral probability of success. Sir William Howe was a man of high military character; nor was it possible for government to select an officer from whom all ranks and parties could entertain more sanguine expectations. The troops

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troops in number, kind, and strength, were such as any statesman, reasoning from general principles and experience, compared with the hostile force, might very fairly infer to be adequate to the purpose. If the event of Howe's command proved very different, the detailed narrative must have shewn that it arose from causes not all chargeable on ministers. The substitution of Burgoyne in the place of Carleton, was a preference which had no foundation in their respective military characters. Whatever Burgoyne's talents might be, Carleton's opportunities of exertion, especially in that country, had been greater, and were crowned with success. The disasters of Burgoyne may certainly be charged, in a considerable degree, to the American minister, whether the failure was in the plan or the execution. Indeed the design of penetrating into Albany appeared to arise from a very general source of miscarriage in all the British schemes respecting America, — unfounded hopes of loyal co-operation. On the return of sir William Howe, the appointment of sir Henry Clinton was a measure that appeared fair and reasonable according to the usual course of military promotion. His character as an officer was unobjectionable, and he had been second in command. He was brave, perfectly acquainted with the details of tactical evolution, and the routine of military duty. How far he had genius adequate to the great and comprehensive schemes, rapid invention, and energetic operation, requisite in a commander in chief on a momentous service, may be fairly questioned. He certainly, on a very important occasion [u], manifested a want of that sagacity which, penetrating the design of an antagonist, can anticipate and disconcert his plans, and baffle his efforts. Though prescription might point to Clinton as a successor to Howe, reason would have conferred

[u] See this vol. page 145.

the

the command upon lord Cornwallis. When war commenced with the house of Bourbon, the primary object of Britain was her navy. The conduct of this department, though branded by opposition with every reproachful epithet, whether considered in particular detail, or general result, appears not to deserve such unqualified censure. The great and broad fact is, the house of Bourbon directed their chief efforts to naval operations, and were joined both by recent subjects and former allies of Britain; yet all this confederated force could obtain no superiority over the navy of England. The fleet first furnished against France, equal in number, and consequently, according to the estimate of uniform experience, a match for the enemy, and the commander employed high in professional reputation, afforded well-grounded expectations of success. The disappointment which ensued could not be imputed to the want of a sufficiently powerful force. The escape of the French armament probably brought on the Spanish, and afterwards the Dutch war; and though in some particular instances trade might have been better protected, and certain warlike operations might have been more seasonably conducted, yet in general the commanders employed, and the armaments equipped, were adequate to the purposes of defence and protection, which, against such an host of foes, was nearly the whole that could be expected.

In the conduct of the war, neither military or naval plans, operations, or results, were so deserving of blame or regret, as the enormous profusion of the public money. If indeed we compare the expence, not with result of operations, but with the true measure, the means required and exerted, the end sought and attained, we find the excess of public money expended beyond public service done, to have been so enormous, as to afford probable grounds

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grounds of suspecting, that the minister employed corrupt donative to purchase that parliamentary influence which he could not command by his abilities. Great however as were the burdens entailed upon Britain by the American war, the efforts which she exhibited when urged by necessity, manifested the extent and depth of her resources, the ability, skill, and valour of her national defenders, and the force of her national character. The American war, in its origin, was unwise; in its conduct, of a very mixed character; in its progress, frequently disastrous; in its result, injurious, but not dishonourable. The struggles to ward off calamity, the exertions to defend independence, manifested qualities, which, under wise direction and more invigorating energy, were fitted and destined not only to restore the national power and splendor, but to extend it far beyond the most glorious experience.

Our resistance to such a confederation manifested the immense resources of Britain, her lofty genius, and invincible spirit.

HOLLAND, misled by a French faction to provoke war with a view of increasing her commerce, far from succeeding in her object, was deprived both of her actual trade, and a great portion of its former gains. When, according to her mercantile character, she struck a balance, she found the whole war account to be loss.

Folly of naval states provoking to hostilities the mistress of the ocean.

SPAIN, in the midst of silver and gold, poor, because void of industry, with every natural advantage of situation, soil, and climate, and the adventitious profits from her colonial possessions, being in that condition of dependence on her inventive and energetic neighbour, which indolence, listlessness, and inaction, in nations as well as individuals, must yield to ingenuity, activity, and enterprise; was by the war loaded with debts, to her overwhelming, because she had not in her character and spirit the means of extrication.

BUT the most momentous evils of the American war have been experienced by France. That great

Consequences proximate and

and

and powerful nation has ever been a sufferer by wars with England: whatever special causes may have at different periods embroiled the two mightiest states of modern history, in the union of resources and character; the general principle on the side of the French has been maritime and commercial competition. In every one of these wars she has been disappointed, her existing navy and commerce impaired, and her naval and commercial resources diminished; the exertions intended to injure Britain failed: whereas, equal efforts of that ability and energy which she possesses in so eminent a degree, if employed in the peaceable improvement of her various resources, without wasteful expenditure, would have produced the commerce and opulence which she in vain sought by burdensome and ruinous wars. When at peace with England, she has flourished; when attempting by war to atchieve maritime superiority, she was discomfitted, and not only expended the treasure of past peaceful industry, but anticipated future gains. Experience might have taught her, that the attempt to be the first in naval power could never be successful. Reflection might have convinced her, that without maritime supremacy, she, from her situation and character, might possess such an extent of commerce as would fully employ that department of national industry, and a sufficient naval force to protect it against the whole world, if she did not interfere with England. If she were susceptible of instruction from the lessons of experience, never could the hopelessness of seeking naval supremacy be more strongly impressed on her than by the American war. Never had Britain fought with so many disadvantages and impediments, yet she had retained the empire of the sea. The history, both of Spain and her own country, might have taught France the certain loss accruing to the maritime states from a contest with England. Provoking the naval efforts of

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eventual to the respective parties.

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of this kingdom, Philip wasted much of that strength which had descended to his dominions from Charles V., and left his successors an easy prey to the efforts of France, who was then at peace with England, and exerted her forces where she was prepollent. Louis XIV. had rendered himself dictator of Europe, until he ventured a naval contest with England. La Hogue avenged Rocroi and the Downs: the victories of Condé and Turenne paved the way to Louis for governing the Christian world by his armies, if his fleets had avoided an encounter with Russel. As a naval war had always been injurious to France, her extraordinary efforts in that which was just ended exhausted her treasury, and deranged her finances much more than was immediately suspected; but fiscal embarrassments, great as they were, proved eventually only instrumental to much more formidable evils which accrued to France from the part that she acted in the American war. The principles which intercourse with American republicanism nourished, were much more mischievous to the French monarchy, than all the expences and losses which she had incurred; and, co-operating with doctrines before industriously spread, had a powerful efficacy in overturning the established constitution. The fall of the French monarchy, aristocracy, and hierarchy, if not caused, was rapidly accelerated by the American war.

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Administration of lord Shelburne — deficient in strength. — State of political parties. — Meeting of parliament. — Unusual length and particularity of his majesty's speech. — Mr. Fox details the reasons of his own resignation. — His party and lord North's concur in censuring ministers — their attacks indicate a concert of counsels — both reprobate the peace. — Ministers defend the peace as necessary in the exhausted state of our navy, army, and finances — and the terms the best that could be attained. — Famous coalition of lord North and Mr. Fox. — The coalition considered relatively to its leaders. — Vote of censure passed against ministers. — Great clamour against the coalition. — Ministers resign. — Ministerial interregnum. — The coalition come into office. — Duke of Portland first lord of the treasury. — Lord North and Mr. Fox secretaries of state. — Revival of commerce with America. — Mr. William Pitt proposes a specific plan of parliamentary reform. — Motion of the duke of Richmond respecting the great seal — combated by lord Loughborough. — Minute economical regulations. — George, prince of Wales — abilities and opening character — a separate establishment appointed for his highness. — India affairs — committee continues its investigations. — From the mass of evidence, Mr. Dundas exhibits a comprehensive statement of the situation of affairs, and of executorial conduct — proposes a bill for the regulation of British India — for the present postpones his plan. — Indian affairs first displayed the force and extent of Mr. Dundas's talents — which were before but partially known and comprehended. — Supplies. — New taxes. — Internal state of Britain at the peace. — Continental occurrences.

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1783. Administration of lord Shelburne.

FROM the resignation of Mr. Fox and the adherents of the marquis of Rockingham, the classes which, though differing in certain opinions, had coincided in opposition to lord North's ministry, were now conceived to have become inimical parties. Lord Shelburne, the prime minister, was a man of

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considerable political knowledge, and particularly distinguished for his minute and detailed acquaintance with foreign affairs. He was, however, more noted for extent and exactness of intelligence, than for the formation of able and beneficial plans from the result. He was therefore, perhaps, less fitted for the supreme management in so trying and critical a situation, than for some secondary department, in which, from his abundant stores, he might have supplied materials for the operation of more energetic and less-experienced genius. In that view had he continued a member of the cabinet of which Mr. Fox was really the head, there is little doubt Britain would have possessed a ministry that, whatever its character might have been in other respects, at least would not have failed in efficacy. Lord Shelburne had attached himself to the illustrious Chatham, and after his decease was considered as the leader of his friends and connexions, but did not greatly increase the number by his own personal influence. Far from overbearing party by genius like Chatham, he was not like many other ministers propped up by a confederacy. Lord Camden, lord Temple, and Mr. Dunning (now lord Ashburton), joined rather than followed Shelburne; lord Thurlow and Mr. Dundas took the same side, but to support government, more than from any approbation of its present chief minister. Mr. Dundas indeed had taken a grand and comprehensive view both of the country and political characters: reduced to distress by the timidity and weakness of mature years, Britain, he conceived, must seek restoration from youthful wisdom. He very early supposed Mr. Pitt to be the man who must save his country as prime minister: Mr. Pitt himself was officially joined with lord Shelburne, but appears to have attended to the duties of his own department without entering into party projects and intrigues.

is deficient in strength.

Neither the number of those who supported the

minister, nor the motives by which some of them were actuated, afforded a probability of permanency to lord Shelburne's administration. There were two other parties, both powerful and well compacted. The benevolent disposition and social qualities, the brilliant wit, pleasing humour, and engaging manners of lord North, had co-operated with political motives in attaching great numbers to his person and interests. No man had exerted himself more uniformly and effectually to serve his friends, and though not from all, he from many experienced that gratitude which was so pleasing to his benignant and affectionate heart. His party no longer possessed the masculine force of Thurlow, the close, powerful, and direct efforts of Dundas; nevertheless in lords Stormont and Carlisle, lord Loughborough and lord Mansfield, Messrs. Courtney, Anstruther, Adam, and Eden, and lord North himself, besides many others of respectable talents, he retained a formidable host of political strength. A less numerous, but still stronger and better compacted body, was that which the philosophic genius of Burke guided and instructed, the rapid and powerful energy of Fox invigorated and led: here shone deliberative and judicial eloquence in their most brilliant lustre; here even Messrs. Erskine and Sheridan acted only second parts. There was besides this constellation of talent, the weight and interest of the whig aristocracy. Lord Shelburne was conscious that, without some accession of political strength, he would be incapable of retaining his situation, and despaired of a re-union with those from whom he had so lately separated; he therefore made overtures to the party which he had uniformly opposed. Mr. Pitt candidly bestowed a just tribute of praise on lord North, but declared his determination never to be a member of a ministry in which that statesman should bear a part. It may indeed be fairly inferred from the conduct of Mr. Pitt, that he

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thought it wiser to stand upon political talents and character, than to seek the props of coalitions and combinations. The intrinsic strength of lord Shelburne, however, was not so great as to preclude the necessity of extrinsic aid; the application therefore in him was commensurate in prudence with the desire of continuance in office, but it proved unavailing. Various reports were now spread concerning the intentions of both the respective parties and individual members, and all eyes were turned to the approaching meeting of parliament, wherein it was expected that the several objects and designs would be unfolded.

Meeting of parliament. Unusual length and particularity of the king's speech.

On the 5th of December 1782, his majesty opened the session in a speech of very great length, and comprehending an unusual extent, variety, and particularity of political disquisition. The introduction stated, that since the close of the last session, his majesty had been constantly employed in the care and attention which the important and critical conjuncture of affairs required; he had put an end to the prosecution of offensive war in America, and had entered into provisional articles for declaring the colonies independent. "In thus (his majesty said) admitting their separation from the crown of these kingdoms, I have sacrificed every consideration of my own to the wishes and opinion of my people. I make it my humble and earnest prayer to Almighty God, that Great Britain may not feel the evils which might result from so great a dismemberment of the empire, and that America may be free from those calamities which have formerly proved, in the mother-country, how essential monarchy is to the enjoyment of constitutional liberty." He went over the principal operations of the campaign, and bestowed the merited praise on the defence of Gibraltar, and other glorious and beneficial efforts. He mentioned the advanced state of the negociations for peace, at the same time the necessity

necessity of being prepared, lest from any unforeseen cause they might be frustrated. To the house of commons he particularised a variety of economical regulations in the expenditure of the army and the civil list, and other reductions; and recommended to parliament an attention to the price of corn, that year unusually high. He extolled the liberality with which the rights and commerce of Ireland had been established, and advised a revision of our whole trading system upon the same comprehensive principles; and, lastly, urged some fundamental regulations of our Asiatic territories. Though no opposition was made to the address in either house, yet severe animadversions were passed upon the speech in both. The recognition of American independence was censured upon two very opposite grounds. By the supporters of lord North it was severely condemned as having done much more than was necessary; and by Mr. Fox's party, as not having done enough. Lord Stormont reprobated an unqualified surrender of the whole, without obtaining a truce, or even a cessation of hostilities, as the price of so lavish a concession. In the most abject and unfortunate reign that Spain ever knew (that of Philip III.), the negotiators of that prince retained ten out of seventeen of the revolted provinces, and detached the rest from their alliance with France; yet by Britain the whole had been conceded, without any attempt to procure more favourable terms. Mr. Fox censured ministers for having made the independence of America conditionally to depend on a conclusion of a peace with France, instead of being absolute. A dispute on this subject, he informed the house, was one of the reasons which had compelled him to resign his late office. It had been uniformly his opinion, that the unconditional recognition of independence was the interest of Britain, because such an acknowledgment would dispose America to end the war as speedily as possible, and

Mr. Fox details the reasons of his late resignation;

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would tend essentially to accelerate a general peace. Finding himself out-voted in the cabinet on this question, he had thought it his duty to quit his situation. Mr. Fox's explanation of his reasons for retiring from office were by no means satisfactory to the public: it was not considered as the part of a patriot to withdraw himself from the service of his country, merely because a measure proposed by him was not adopted; it was conceived, that his extraordinary abilities, employed in the cabinet, might have rendered essential service to his country, whether the recognition of American independence were conditional or absolute. The real motives of his conduct were very generally construed to be dissatisfaction with the appointment of Lord Shelburne to that office which he wished to be held by a distinguished member of the whig party.

UNTIL the recess, the attention of both houses was chiefly employed in motions for the production of papers respecting the negociation, which were negatived on the ground of being premature until the treaty should be brought to a close.

his party and lord North's concur in censuring ministers:

PARLIAMENT met after the Christmas holidays, on the 21st of January 1783: the preliminary articles of peace between Great Britain and France having been signed at Versailles, were laid before legislature on the 27th of January, and the 17th of February was appointed for taking them into consideration. Lord North and Mr. Fox had both very frequently censured administration: their animadversions had arisen from professedly different principles: there had been no appearance of concert either in their attacks upon ministers or any other measures. The discussion of the peace manifested a systematic regularity of procedure, a selection of parts in the debate, and a concurrence of principles of reasoning and of particular arguments, which were too striking to be the result of accident, and obviously intimating a concert between two parties so long totally

their attacks indicate a concert of counsels:

inimical

inimical to each other. Mr. Thomas Pitt moved an address to his majesty, expressing a high approbation of the peace. Lord John Cavendish, as speaker for the whig party, proposed an amendment, which should contain no opinion on the merit of the peace, but declare their resolution to bestow on it that serious and full attention which the importance of the subject deserved; but pledge themselves, whatever conclusion they might draw from the investigation of the terms, that they should invariably adhere to the articles which his majesty had stipulated. Lord North moved a second amendment, expressive of the regard due from the nation to the loyalists who had suffered so much in supporting the cause of Great Britain. The ministerial speakers defended the peace; first, as necessary in the circumstances of the country; and, secondly, as favourable in point of terms. Our finances, our navy, and our army, they contended, were in so deplorable a state as to render the continuance of the war ruinous. To maintain this position respecting pecuniary resources, they entered into a detailed account of incumbrances and expenditure. The national debt, funded and unfunded, amounted to upwards of two hundred and fifty millions. The annual interest, together with the necessary expence of a peace establishment, was fully equal to all the revenue which the people, groaning already under the load of taxes, could afford. Our navy, so far from being adequate to the purposes of offensive competition with the combined fleets of Europe, was scarcely sufficient for effectual defence. Our fleet did not exceed a hundred sail of the line, while the armaments of France, Spain, and Holland, amounted to a hundred and seventy sail of the line. By continuing merely defensive war we could gain nothing, and consequently could not expect by another campaign to obtain a better peace. The army was still more inferior to the armies of our

both reprobate the peace.

Ministers defend the peace as necessary in the state of the army, navy, and finances;

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enemies, and totally inadequate to farther contest. These general positions they illustrated by a detailed account of our force in various parts of the world. Our most brilliant successes had been merely defensive, and only enabled us to retard the progress of the enemy. From this view of total inability to engage in another campaign with a prospect of bringing it to a more favourable conclusion, it was argued, that peace, on any terms, would break the powerful confederacy, and give us time to recruit our wasted strength; and therefore was preferable to a continuance of the war. But it was further contended, that the conditions of the peace were advantageous. One of the chief objections to the treaty was the participation allowed the French in the Newfoundland fishery; but this, called by opposition a cession, was by ministers argued to be only the definition and limitation of a right which always had been exercised by France, and formerly, from being indefinite, was the source of perpetual contention. The space to which France was now limited, was very inconsiderable both in extent and productiveness in comparison of the coast which Britain possessed. The islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, ceded to France, were only a restitution of what had belonged to her before the preceding war; and so far were these places from admitting fortifications that could annoy our fishery in a future war, the most skilful engineers had certified, that neither island would admit the construction of a fortress which could stand the attack of the smallest of our frigates. During the detail of the various cessions in the West, Africa, and the East Indies, they endeavoured to prove that they were really of little importance. The articles of the treaty of Utrecht, respecting Dunkirk, had never been inforced, and were not now designed to be executed; their abrogation therefore could not be detrimental to England. France desired their suppression as a

and the terms the best that could be obtained.

point

point of honour; and by compliance we gratified the other party, without incurring any loss ourselves. East and West Florida and Minorca, which were now yielded to Spain, had already cost this country much more than they brought, and were besides balanced by the restitution of the Bahama islands and Providence. The article most strongly censured was, the terms procured for the loyalists. In answer to those, it was said, that congress was invested with no power over the property of the several states: a recommendation to the provincial assemblies was all which their constitutional authority permitted them to undertake; but whatever weight could be justly allowed to any of the objections against the concessions, the supporters of the peace contended, that either severally or jointly, they were of no moment when balanced with the evils of continuing the war. Having endeavoured to defend the peace, both on the grounds of general expediency and particular conditions, they next proceeded to the motives of their opponents; they asserted, that an union of professed tories and professed whigs, who for so many years had been abusing and reviling each other, must arise from some different reason than mutual agreement of political opinion. The following was the account which they gave of this unexpected confederation: lord North's party had long experienced the advantages of office, but at the same time had been exposed to the forcible attacks of Mr. Fox, and the whig confederacy of which he had become a member; they now sought to regain the benefits without suffering the annoyance; Mr. Fox and his co-adjutors conceived that their favourite plan of governing by a combination was more certainly practicable by extending its objects; and both parties found it expedient to sacrifice all animosity and professed reprobation to reciprocal interest; the peace was merely a pretext for joining the parties, in order to force their way into administration.

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nistration. The event so far justified this interpretation, that the new confederacy outvoted ministers, and the amendments were carried in the house of commons by a considerable majority.

Famous coalition of lord North and Mr. Fox.

WHEN this coalition was reported abroad, it was first received with a mixture of doubt and astonishment. Many of the sanguine admirers of Mr. Fox, who had been accustomed to receive his orations, not merely as effusions of genius, but as oracles of truth, conceived lord North to be as bad, as malignant, and diabolical, as Mr. Fox, in the rapidity of invention, prompted by passion, and borne away by fancy, chose to represent his antagonist. These could not at first believe that he associated with a man whom he taught them to consider as a weak and wicked minister; but when they found that a coalition had taken place, they turned, against the late object of their idolatry, a resentment proportioned to their recent adoration. Discerning and impartial men, estimating the merits of a coalition in such circumstances, laid little stress on the violent expressions which, in the paroxysms of impassioned eloquence, Mr. Fox had employed; but they examined the history of his planned and deliberative proceedings. The principal points of difference between lord North and Mr. Fox were not speculative opinions, but practical conduct. He had for a series of years declared the measures and policy of lord North to be such as to demonstrate incapacity, corruption, profligacy, and every quality in a minister that was ruinous to the country over which he presided. He had not confined himself to imputation of folly and weakness, but had alleged the highest criminality. With lord North, whom, in 1782, he had declared deserving of death for the wickedness of his administration, Mr. Fox, in 1783, declared himself ready to co-operate in administration. If Mr. Fox represented lord North as the

The coalition considered relatively to its leaders, and objects.

weakest

weakest and blackest of men, believing him to be otherwise, what confidence was to be reposed in any of his future declarations? If he before believed him to be so bad as he represented, what had happened in that short time to change his opinion? What had lord North done when out of office to approve himself to Mr. Fox fit for being minister, when, in office, declared by him to be fit only for the block? These were questions which impartial men naturally asked, in order to determine how far it was proper to receive the professions of Mr. Fox. Equal blame was by no means attached to lord North; he had never declared any opinion against the political talents or character of Mr. Fox. There was, therefore, no inconsistency in coalescing with him as a statesman, provided the objects to be sought, and the means to be employed by that combination, were meritorious; and these soon appeared, though not in their full extent. A very short time manifested the intention of the coalition to be, through their paramount influence in the house of commons, to dictate to his majesty the choice of ministers, which is left by the constitution of the country to his own discretion. This purpose was much more incompatible with the long-professed principles of lord North, than with the recent principles and doctrines of Mr. Fox. Indeed, lord North, and Mr. Fox, able as they were by nature, and conversant from experience and situation in the politics of the country, appeared to have considered the constitution partially rather than completely. They could neither be said to be supporters of the whole system, nor of the balances on which its perfection depends. Lord North was a partisan of the monarchical, and Mr. Fox of the popular, department. The former, however, now joined with the latter in extending the power of the commons, by reducing the power of the crown. Thus a coalition with lord North, FOR ANY PURPOSE TO BE EFFECTED

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BY POLITICAL ABILITIES AND INTEGRITY, was totally inconsistent with the very often repeated professions of Mr. Fox. *This specific object* of the coalition was no less incompatible with the uniformly declared principles of lord North. Mr. Fox could not, consistently, coalesce with lord North as a statesman; lord North could not, consistently, coalesce with any man to reduce the kingly prerogative.

The coalition controverts the arguments of ministers in favour of the peace.

HAVING rejected the motion for approving the peace, the coalition party next proceeded to a positive censure. On the 21st of February, it was moved, that the concessions granted by the peace to the enemies of Britain, were greater than either the actual situation of their respective possessions, or their comparative strength, entitled them to receive. In support of this proposition they followed the order of their adversaries, and endeavoured to prove by detailed accounts, that the finances, the army, and navy, were not in the reduced state alleged by ministers; that the cessions were much more important than they pretended; and also, that they might have been prevented. In speaking on our financial situation, Mr. Fox, with great force and effect, exposed the absurdity of economists supposing specific limits to our national credit. "Speculative politicians (he said) have in all times been fond of circumscribing the bounds of public credit, and drawing a line beyond which they imagine it cannot be stretched; but repeated experience has shewn, that such ideas are, for the most part, imaginary and chimerical. National credit is relative to the result of private and public ability and industry. It is impossible, therefore, to fix the line beyond which it cannot extend, without, at the same time, marking the bounds of that ability and industry." The navy Mr. Fox declared to be in a flourishing state, and to have been competent in the late campaign to every purpose of offence and defence. It was, however, the same that had been equipped under lord Sandwich;

Grand views of Fox on public credit.

Sandwich; and for the ruinous state of which this orator had attacked the first lord of the admiralty, the year before, with such bitter severity. His general arguments against the present ministry proceeded on an assumption, that our resources were in a flourishing state: we certainly were neither richer nor stronger within the last ten months; his reasoning, therefore, contained a virtual admission, that his charges against the former ministry of having utterly ruined the country, were totally unfounded. Mr. Fox displayed skilful dexterity in his defence of the coalition: he kept aloof from the principles and objects of the present combination, and exerted his eloquence in impressing a general position, that union between individuals and parties formerly inimical, was often meritorious; and that such junctions frequently had been effected in this country, to the very great advantage of the nation. Impartial observers saw that the obvious truth of this general assertion proved nothing respecting the merit or demerit of this particular coalition. The question being called for, the motion for censuring ministry was carried in the affirmative, by a majority of two hundred and twenty-four to two hundred and eight. In the house of lords a similar proposition was negatived.

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The commons pass a vote of censure on ministers.

In consequence of the censure of the commons, lord Shelburne resigned his office. The chancellor of the exchequer declared publicly in the house that he only held his place until a successor should be appointed. During the whole month of March there was a ministerial interregnum: the reasons which the one side alleged for this delay were the mutual jealousy that still subsisted between the coalesced parties, and the difficulties which they found in adjusting their several pretensions; others asserted that the court wished to retain the abilities of the lord chancellor, and that Mr. Fox's party insisted on the exclusion of that illustrious character. The adherents

Ministers resign.

Ministerial interregnum.

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adherents of the coalition professed to think that the sovereign was endeavouring to use his own prerogative, by forming a ministry without regard to the newly established connexion. During this time the kingdom was without any responsible government; with the finances neglected, the military establishments unreduced, and the negociations with foreign powers, which the critical conjuncture of affairs rendered peculiarly important, entirely at a stand. During this interval, various inquiries were made in the house concerning pensions which had been recently granted. On discussing the particulars, however, the coalition members found that no plausible objections could be maintained to the several grants of the late ministers. Mr. Coke, member for Norfolk, gave notice that he meant in the course of the following week to move an address to his majesty to urge the formation of a new ministry. The king ordered the duke of Portland and lord North to lay before him a sketch of their proposed arrangements; but nothing conclusive having been determined, Mr. Coke, on the 24th, made the promised motion, in the discussion of which there was a considerable degree of personal invective. The opposite party, comprehending several independent country gentlemen, attacked the coalition. One gentleman proposed to add to the address the exclusion of all those who had been comprised in Mr. Fox's motion in the former year, declaring the incapacity of his present associates; "that his majesty should please not to nominate or appoint any person or persons to fill up the vacant departments, *who by their mismanagement of public affairs, and want of foresight and abilities, when they were in office, had lost the confidence of the people.*" [x] The coalition retorted these sarcastic attacks, by repeating the vote of censure on the late ministry;

[x] The words inserted in italics are extracted from a motion of Mr. Fox, in 1782, against lord North and his colleagues.

they

they also revived the charges against secret advisers of the crown. To these Mr. Fox imputed the delay in forming the new administration; and became so pointedly personal, as to call up Mr. Jenkinson, who acknowledged that he had been in conference with the king more than once: as a privy counsellor, he was bound to give his advice when asked; he had done so to the best of his judgment, but never had obtruded his counsel. The proposed address was carried; and his majesty answered, that his earnest desire was to do every thing in his power to comply with the wishes of his faithful commons. On the 31st of March, Mr. Pitt informed the house that he had that day resigned his office; but no new minister having been appointed, the coalition proposed fresh motions in order to hasten the completion of the arrangements.

The coalition come into office.

The duke of Portland is first lord of the treasury; lord North and Mr. Fox are secretaries of state.

On the 20th of April, a new administration was announced, of which the following were the principal members: the duke of Portland was first commissioner of the treasury; lord North, secretary of state for the home department; Mr. Fox, secretary for the foreign; lord John Cavendish, chancellor of the exchequer; lord viscount Keppel, first commissioner of the admiralty; lord viscount Stormont, president of the council; the earl of Carlisle, privy seal: the great seal was put into commission, the first in the nomination being lord Loughborough; the earl of Hertford was appointed chamberlain, and the earl of Dartmouth steward of the household; lord viscount Townshend was made master-general of the ordnance; Mr. Burke, paymaster-general; Mr. Charles Townshend, treasurer of the navy; Mr. Fitzpatrick, secretary of war; Mr. Wallace and Mr. Lee had the offices of attorney and solicitor general; and the earl of Northington was appointed to the lord lieutenancy of Ireland.

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Revival of commerce with America.

THE first business that engaged the attention of the new ministers was to open a commerce with North America. By the prohibitory acts which had been passed during the revolt, all communication with that country, in the way of trade, was entirely precluded; it was the prevailing opinion in parliament, that those acts were virtually repealed by the acknowledgement of the independence of the United States; nevertheless in their new character they became subject to other restrictions which it was necessary to relax and modify. A bill for this purpose had been brought into the house of commons by the late ministry, but during the great variety of discussions which it underwent, difficulties of such a complicated and important nature had arisen, that it never got through the committee. In the mean time, no regulations whatever having been stipulated by the treaty of peace, the commercial interests of the country were suffering very materially; for not only a great number of vessels richly freighted for America were detained in the harbour, but there was a considerable danger of having the market pre-occupied by our rivals. In this emergency, the new ministers thought it most advisable to drop the whole bill for the present, and to pass two short laws, one to repeal all the prohibitory acts, the other to remove the necessity of requiring manifests or other documents, and to lodge in the king and council, for a limited time, a power to make such regulations as might be expedient.

Mr. William Pitt proposes a specific plan of reform.

ON the 7th of May, Mr. William Pitt made a motion respecting the reform of parliamentary representation; the mode intended last year of examining the subject by a committee was accounted too general, he therefore designed to bring forward specific propositions. The object of the first was to prevent bribery at elections, the second proposed

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to disfranchise a borough which should be convicted of gross corruption; but that the minority of voters should be entitled to a vote for the county in which such boroughs should be situated: his third proposition was, that an augmentation of the knights of shires, and representatives of the metropolis, should be added to the state of the representation. He left the number for future discussion, but said he should recommend one hundred. The arguments both for and against a parliamentary reform were nearly the same as in the preceding session, but the supporters constituted a smaller proportion; the majority against the reform were two hundred and ninety-three to one hundred and forty-nine.

Motion of the duke of Richmond respecting the great seal,

On the 8th of June, the duke of Richmond introduced a motion respecting the great seal being put into commission. The appointment of judges (he alleged) commissioners, with large salaries and perquisites dependent on the will of the crown, tended to invalidate acts for securing the independency of the judicative officers: to ensure this great object it was necessary, he contended, first, that the tenure of their offices should be certain; secondly, that the amount of their salaries should be ascertained, and thus the temptations arising from fear of removal, or hopes of greater gain, would be prevented. His grace, by a metaphysical disquisition on the nature of the passions, shewed that hope and fear were such powerful affections as often to overcome justice and rectitude; and having argued in support of his motion concerning the great seal, he proceeded to some general observations on the incompatibility of the situation of a judge and a statesman, and endeavoured to support his reasonings by the authority of writers on political government. From his arguments and authorities he inferred, that neither the lords chief justices, nor lords chancellors, ought to sit in the house of peers. Lord Loughborough replied to his grace

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is combated by lord Loughborough.

in a speech which was esteemed equal to any that ever was delivered, even by its author himself. The motion, he argued, proceeded on a visionary speculation, the mover had stated no actual grievance; but had proposed redress. The best and only test of political truth was experience; the practice had often obtained of putting the seals into commission; the judges had long sitten in parliament, no evil or inconvenience had been experienced in the administration of justice from their voice in the legislature, and most important benefit had accrued to parliament from their legal and judicial ability and knowledge. These were strong and striking facts not to be controverted by vague observations on the nature of hope and fear; such disquisitions belonged to the schools; legislatures rarely or never adopted them, but contented themselves with the application of law to any ill habit of the mind, as it became predominant, and inconvenient to the just and rational ends of government. A theory, professing to have for its object a practical corrective and improvement, should shew what is amiss, and point out the manner in which it is to be reformed: on these grounds the motion was rejected. During this session a bill passed both houses for removing and preventing all doubts which had arisen, or might arise, concerning the exclusive right of the parliament and courts of Ireland in matters of legislation and judicature; and for preventing any writ of error or appeal from any of his majesty's courts in the sister kingdom from being received, heard, and adjudged in any of his majesty's tribunals in Britain. Before the judicial and legislative independence of Ireland had been recognized, it was usual to remove causes by a writ of error from the Irish courts to the British. An appeal of this sort was before the court of king's bench when the last settlement was made; the chief justice considering

it necessary to proceed with pending suits, had given a judgment: this procedure, though unavoidable on the part of his lordship, had excited violent clamours in Ireland. To pacify these they proposed the present bill, though really implied in the general arrangement of the former year. A variety of economical regulations took place, more numerous than important. The objects, indeed, were the minute departments of public offices, such as salaries of clerks and their deputies, but no plan was proposed for diminishing the momentous departments of national expence.

Minute regulations of economy.

GEORGE, prince of Wales, had now reached the years of manhood; and his age and dignified rank called for a separate establishment, as a measure agreeable to the uniform practice respecting the heir of the crown, while his personal character, his talents and accomplishments, rendered it additionally desirable that he should be placed in a situation in which he could more fully exhibit the elegance of his taste, the dignified and engaging gracefulness of his manners, the beneficent generosity of his disposition, his liberal patronage of merit, and his many other princely virtues. His highness in his early youth had attended little to party distinction, but gay and animated, intelligent, erudite, and refined, he had sought pleasure and wit, information, ability, and taste, wherever they were to be found. He was particularly captivated by the open, liberal, and impressive manners, and the social qualities of Mr. Charles Fox, while he admired the unassuming greatness of his character. The habits of that gentleman were also peculiarly attractive to youth; he was no austere ascetic, he was pleasurable and gay; in point of frolic and indulgence, at thirty such a companion as suited the ideas of eighteen. Through Mr. Fox, his highness came to associate often with the wit of a Hare and a Sheridan, and sometimes with the wisdom of a Burke. The party

George, prince of Wales,

abilities and character of.

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now in power was considered as most agreeable to his highness; but the proposal for the establishment was received with unanimity by all. It was found, on considering the royal message, that his majesty required only a temporary aid of sixty thousand pounds for the equipment of the prince, and that he meant to settle fifty thousand a year on his highness from the civil list. The sum desired was immediately voted, and an address of thanks presented to his majesty.

A separate establishment is appointed for his highness.

Indian affairs: the committees continue their investigations.

INDIAN affairs continued this year to occupy the unremitting attention of the two committees; but from the unsettled state of government, during a considerable part of the session, no important measures were adopted either for redressing the grievances or investigating the delinquency stated in the reports, or forming systems for the future regulation of Indian affairs. Mr. Dundas having in the secret committee, investigated an immense mass of evidence, oral and written, in April 1782, exhibited a clear and connected detail of the state and the history of India, from the establishment of the new system of 1773; the real interests of the company, the general laws and successive special directions transmitted to the company's servants for the preservation and promotion of those interests; the actual conduct of the principal servants and their subordinate agents, and the existing situation of those settlements. From these multiform, numerous, and complicated materials, the energetic and simplifying mind of Mr. Dundas educed the general principles in two great propositions. There was very gross mismanagement, which it became the deliberative wisdom of the legislature to correct, and also to devise means of improving the resources to the highest advantage. There was likewise an appearance of misconduct and misdemeanors, which it behoved judicial inquiry to examine. For these purposes he proposed that a committee

Mr. Dundas exhibits a comprehensive statement of affairs, and of executorial conduct.

committee of the whole house should sit upon the affairs of India. The two principal objects of inquisitorial procedure, stated by Mr. Dundas, were sir Thomas Rumbold, governor of Madras, and Warren Hastings, esq. governor-general of Bengal. Having in a variety of propositions drawn the outline of Mr. Hastings's alleged conduct, he moved a severe censure on the proceedings of the governor-general, and his co-adjutor in council Mr. Hornsby; and a declaration that it was the duty of the directors to recal them from India.[y] He also moved a bill of pains and penalties against sir Thomas Rumbold, on various charges of peculation, corruption, and disobedience of the company's orders; violation of treaties, assumption of undue powers, and deterioration of the company's interest for his own private emolument and that of his underlings; he moreover charged that officer with having bestowed iniquitous grants on the nabob of Arcot; by injustice and faithlessness provoked, for his own avaricious purposes, the enmity of the Nizam, and thereby endangered the possessions of the company. As it was just and necessary that, before the bill should be passed, the accused should be heard in his own defence, and the subject was very extensive and intricate, by the prorogation of parliament, in July, it was necessarily postponed to the following session. So much of the session of 1783, was consumed in the debates between the parties, that it was late before sir Thomas Rumbold occupied a great share of their attention. Mr. Dundas persevered in supporting the charges against Rumbold, and controverting his defence. But towards the close of the session, the committee of the house was so thinly attended, and appeared so little concerned to ascertain the merits of the case, that the prosecutor deemed farther procedure hopeless, and agreed to

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[y] The directors passed a resolution for the recal, which was afterwards overturned by the court of proprietors.

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a motion for postponing the consideration to a period when he knew parliament would not be sitting; and thus virtually abandoned the charge. In this session he proceeded to his second great object of more permanent consequence, the formation of a plan for the better management of the government in India, and brought in a bill for the purpose. The principal objects of this proposition were, to invest the governor-general with a discretionary power to act against the will of the council, whenever he should think it necessary for the public good; to allow the subordinate governors a negative on every proposition, till the determination of the supreme council should be known; to secure to the zemindars or landholders of Hindostan, a permanent interest in their respective tenures; to cause the debts of the rajah of Tanjore and of the nabob of Arcot to be carefully examined; to put an end to the oppressions of the latter, and the corrupt practices of his creditors, by securing to the rajah the full and undisturbed enjoyment of his kingdom; lastly, to recal governor Hastings, prevent the court of proprietors from acting in opposition to the sense of parliament, and to nominate a new governor-general. For this important office Mr. Dundas recommended the earl Cornwallis. Ministers intimated their disapprobation of some parts of this scheme, and also declared an intention of proposing a plan early in the following session; wherefore Mr. Dundas did not urge his bill.

He proposes a bill for the regulation of British India.

For the present postpones his plan.

THE consideration of Indian affairs first afforded to Mr. Dundas an opportunity of completely exhibiting the powers and habits which combine to render him at once great and beneficial. During the administration of lord North, his abilities were but imperfectly known, because occasion had admitted of only partial exertion. He was distinguished as a clear, direct, and forcible reasoner; but he had not yet shewn his abilities as a statesman. In the

Indian affairs first displayed the force and extent of Mr. Dundas's talents,

which were before but partially known and comprehended.

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Indian inquiry he manifested the most patient, constant, and active industry to investigate; penetrating acuteness to discover the nature and situation of affairs; enlarged views to comprehend their tendency; fertile and energetic invention to devise regulations both for correction and improvement. Mr. Dundas, indeed, when in opposition to ministers, whose means of procuring their offices he did not approve, was far from considering invectives against administration as the chief business of a member of parliament. He planned and proposed himself, much oftener than he censured the propositions and schemes of others.

Supplies.

The supplies of this year having been voted before the reduction of the army, were nearly the same as in the former year: twelve millions were raised by a loan, the terms of which were severely censured by opposition, and defended by ministers on the ground of necessity.

New taxes.

The new taxes were additional duties on bills of exchange, probates of wills, and legacies on bonds and law proceedings, and on stage coaches and diligences; also new imposts on certificates of marriages, births, and christenings; licences for vending medicines, waggons and other commercial and agricultural carriages, on turnpike-road and inclosure bills, on agreements and awards. The most important in its effects upon public opinion, and the popularity of ministers, was the receipt tax. This duty was perfectly agreeable to the principles of revenue, as it levied money in proportions founded on the extent of pecuniary transactions, by which it was to be presumed, the parties, if they acted judiciously, were deriving a benefit which could afford the respective rates. It was approved by able and candid financiers of all parties, both in and out of parliament: yet applying to transfers and other mercantile concerns that were recurring every day, hour, and minute, contravening former habits and constant practice, it was infinitely

The receipt tax.

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more disrelished by the people, than a partial, oppressive, and exorbitant impost, that would have been raised at stated and distant periods, and thus not perpetually press itself on the recollection and senses.

The session terminates.

A SESSION, much more remarkable for debate than enactment, was terminated on the 16th of July, by a speech shorter and more general than usual. The complicated discussions between the late belligerent powers had prevented the definitive terms of peace from being finally settled; but his majesty had no doubt of their speedy conclusion. The affairs of the East Indies would require their early meeting in the following season. Meanwhile the king recommended to them to employ their influence in their respective districts in promoting a spirit of industry, regularity, and order, as the true sources of revenue and power to the nation.

Internal state of Britain at the peace.

THE events of Britain, either foreign or domestic, during the recess of 1783, were of little importance compared with those which the history has presented in recording the struggles of an arduous contest; the energy of war had ceased, the industry and enterprise of peace were not begun. The nation, in the interval of action, seemed to be in a state of languor, from which it could be roused only by very strong stimulatives. Trade was stagnant, taxes, compared with the supposed resources of the country, enormous; the national debt doubled in eight years, appeared overwhelming. Depression of situation and spirits, reciprocally increased each other, by action and reaction; distress encouraged despondency, despondency precluded exertion and enterprise, the only effectual means of alleviating and removing distress. Occupied chiefly by party contention, the legislature had, in the late session, devised no effectual means for the improvement of the peace: the present administration, however able many of its members actually were, did not possess

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the confidence of the majority of the people; and extrication from melancholy circumstances was not expected from their counsels. To these political causes of gloomy retrospect and forebodings, the present, though temporary, pressure of scarcity added its distresses. The crops of 1782 had been extremely deficient in all parts of these realms, and having been also unproductive on the continent, had much diminished the usual sources of importation. The wants of the poor concurring with so many other incentives to discontent, produced great disturbances and riots in various parts of the country. In several places, especially puritanical districts of Scotland, enthusiasm contributed its share to the disorders. The anti-popish societies still continued to exist among the very lowest orders; in the abhorrence of the Romish church great numbers of mechanics and manufacturing journeymen avowed their displeasure against that government by which they affirmed popery to be impiously protected. They insulted and outraged the magistracy, attacked the military, and even killed several soldiers. Their zeal becoming more eccentric and extravagant, they branched out into various sects, which, whatever might be the peculiar chimeras of their phrenzy, concurred in disavowing allegiance, every moral obligation and duty, if they conceived them to interfere with their theological notions.* One sentiment they appeared to have borrowed from the fifth monarchy-men of Cromwellian celebrity, that *all things are lawful unto the saints.* A relaxation of order manifested itself in a variety of crimes, especially around the metropolis. Theft and forgery were extremely frequent, robbery became more daring and atrocious; murder and barbarity, formerly so

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* The reader will find in the Gentleman's Magazine, and other periodical works for the year 1783, details and documents which fully authenticate and support this general account; especially Gentleman's Magazine, p. 249 and 340; London Magazine, p. 88; and Morning Chronicle, repeatedly, under the signature of a Scotch Highlander.

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rare among English depredators, now abounded; the increase of depravity was great and alarming.

1783. Settlement of Genevese emigrants.

THE national and public acts of the country at this season, were chiefly the evacuation of America on the 3d of September; and the preliminaries between Britain and the States General were also subscribed the same day. This year a commotion in a distant state produced a considerable accession of arts and industry to his majesty's dominions; certain alterations having been proposed in the constitution of the illustrious though small republic of Geneva, a great proportion of the inhabitants were so averse to the changes, that they determined to emigrate, and appointed commissioners to collect information concerning asylums wherein they might enjoy the greatest security, and be able to improve to the best advantage their resources of property and character. In the beginning of 1783 these commissioners arrived in Dublin, and were received with affectionate kindness by the hospitable and generous Irish. The delegates of the volunteer corps of the province of Leinster, unanimously resolved, that the inhabitants of Geneva, who sought refuge from oppression and tyranny, deserved the highest commendation; and that such of them as established themselves in that country should always receive the warmest support. The commissioners applied to government for its sanction to the desired settlement; and the lord lieutenant was empowered by his majesty to signify not only his royal approbation and assurance of protection and regard, and the enjoyment of such privileges as would contribute to their welfare and prosperity; but to promise also pecuniary assistance to enable them to execute the projected emigration and establishment. Their commissioners were requested to detail the privileges and regulations which they wished to be granted to their intended place of residence; and were told, that after being approved by his majesty's law servants, they should be extended

tended into a charter. It was recommended to the commissioners to examine, with all expedition, a situation for their new town; and further, to establish in it an academy on the principle of those of Geneva, through which the youth of all countries in Europe had derived such important benefit. The commissioners chose the county of Waterford as the scene of the proposed colony. Of these gentlemen, the most active was Mr. D'Ivernois, since so well known in political literature, by the title of sir Francis D'Ivernois.

Continental occurrences.

WHILE on the northern confines of the Alps, the dissensions of man were producing political separation; in that delightful country, which stretches from their southern frontiers, the discord of the elements caused a most tremendous natural convulsion. The portion of Italy which, from being a principal scene of Grecian colonies, was anciently known by the name of Grecia Magna; and in modern times bears the appellation of the Two Calabrias, suffered a succession of earthquakes, the longest, most dreadful and destructive to the face of the country, and to mankind, that was ever experienced in those regions. The first shock happened about noon on the 5th of February 1783, and was of all the most fatal; it came on suddenly, without any of the usual indications; it was about the Italian time of dinner, when the people were in their houses; but beyond all, the motion of the earth in that shock was vertical, rising suddenly upwards from its foundations, and as suddenly sinking again. By this fatal motion the greatest buildings, villages, towns, and entire cities were instantaneously involved in one common destruction; nothing remaining to be seen but vast heaps of undistinguishable ruins, without any traces of streets or houses. One of the towns and cities where the greatest devastation took place was Casal-Nuova, in which the princess Gerase Grimaldi, with more than four thousand of her subjects, perished

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perished in the same instant. At Baguara, above three thousand of the inhabitants were lost. Radicina and Palma counted their loss at above three thousand each: Terra Nuova at about fourteen hundred; and Semina at still more. The greater mischief was in Calabria Ultra, the extreme province of Italy next to Sicily. The inhabitants of Scylla sought refuge on the celebrated rock from its vicinity to which the town was denominated; and following the example of their prince [a], descended to a little harbour at the foot of the hill, where getting into boats, or stretched upon the shore, they thought themselves free from danger. But in the course of the night, a stupendous wave, which is said to have been driven furiously overland, upon its return swept away the unfortunate prince, with two thousand four hundred and seventy-three of his subjects. The north-east angle of Sicily, including the city of Messina, were likewise in a considerable degree victims of that shock. But the greatest violence of its exertion, and its most dreadful effects, were in the plain on the western side of the Appennines; mountains were rent, vallies closed; the hills that formed them being thrown from their places, and meeting their opposites in the centre, the course of rivers was necessarily changed, or the waters being entirely dammed up, they were turned into great and increasing lakes. [b]

THE earth in all that part of Italy continued for many weeks in a constant state of tremor; and several shocks, with different degrees of violence, were every day felt, so that the unhappy people, already worn down with calamity and grief, through

[a] Many of the barons of the kingdom of Naples have the title of princes.

[b] The whole of the mortality, according to the returns made to the secretary of state's office in Naples, amounted to 33,567. These returns, drawn up in the confusion and misery that prevailed, could not be accurate; and it was supposed by the best judges, that the real loss, including strangers, amounted at least to 40,000. These estimates only take in immediate victims to the earthquakes; those who perished through want, diseases, anguish, and every species of subsequent distress, not being included.

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the loss of their property and of their dearest relations, were still kept in a continual state of apprehension and terror. The king and government of Naples employed every possible means for both affording immediate relief to the sufferers, and assistance towards their recovery from the loss of their property. The archbishop of Reggio particularly distinguished himself for benevolence and charity. He disposed of his own furniture, equipages, and most productive moveables, and employed all the money he could raise to alleviate the distresses of his flocks. Having exhausted his pecuniary resources, he still, by infusing the cordial balm of sympathy, allayed those miseries which he could not remove. This truly christian pastor is not unworthy of being ranked with the celebrated bishop of Marseilles, as one of the numberless instances of the beneficent purposes to which recently reproached hierarchs applied their possessions.

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Constituents and strength of the coalition ministry. — Combines genius, political experience, and aristocratical influence. — Meeting of parliament. — His majesty's speech — recommends to their consideration British India — commerce and revenue. — Mr. Fox's East India bill — object, to vest the whole affairs of the company in certain commissioners to be appointed by parliament, and administer commercial as well as territorial concerns. — Arguments for the bill. — The company is in a state of bankruptcy, and unfit to manage its own affairs. — The enormous abuses of its servants, and the distresses of India. — The bill is opposed by Mr. Pitt. — Arguments against the bill, that it is an infringement of chartered rights, without the justification of necessity — and the formation of an influence dependent on the present ministers. — By Mr. Dundas. — He charges Mr. Fox with aspiring at perpetual dictatorship. — Burke's celebrated speech on the extent and bounds of chartered rights. — Allegations against Mr. Hastings. — Petitions of the India company. — Bill passes the commons by a great majority. — Other corporate bodies petition against the violation of a charter. — Bill becomes obnoxious to the public. — Bill rejected by the lords. — Causes assigned by ministry for the rejection of the bill. — Alleged to be disagreeable to his majesty. — Reported interference through earl Temple canvassed in the house of commons. — Ministers dismissed their offices. — Character of Mr. Fox's East India bill — whether right or wrong, decisive and efficient — thoroughly adapted to its end, whether good or bad — tended to secure Mr. Fox's continuance in power, however that power might be used. — General outcry against Mr. Fox. — Impartial estimate of this political scheme. — Mr. William Pitt prime minister, with a minority in the house of commons. — Unpopularity of Mr. Fox and the coalition party. — Mr. Pitt's East India Bill — rejected. — Question on dictation to the crown by the commons in the choice of a minister. — King, peers, and the public favourable to Mr. Pitt. — Attempt of independent gentlemen to effect an accommodation between the ministerial and opposition party. — Meeting

—Meeting for that purpose. — Correspondence with the duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt.—Design proves abortive. —Display of Mr. Pitt's talents and character in resisting such a confederacy of genius and power.—Public estimation of the contending leaders. —The king declares his intention of taking the sense of his people.—Dissolution and character of this parliament.

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THE season now approached for the meeting of parliament: in the last session ministers had done little more than procure their appointments. They had proposed no important schemes of policy to ascertain their collective character; the public might conjecture what they would be, but could not yet know what they were. The coalition administration, it was obvious, had many symptoms of strength superior to that which was possessed by any ministry since the commencement of this reign. It combined the leading members of both parties that prevailed during the American war; united philosophy and genius with official experience; and to consolidate parts formerly heterogeneous into one mass, a great weight of aristocratic influence was superadded. Lord North retained many of his numerous supporters: Mr. Fox had a less numerous, but a still more able band of friends. The result of this union of genius, experience, rank, and property, was a majority seldom seen in favour of ministers from the time of the illustrious Pitt. The friends of this ministry conceived it to comprise all that was requisite to heal the wounds and restore the prosperity of their country. Its opponents, from the character of its principal members, and especially its acting head, equally expected boldness, decision, and efficacy; but a mischievous, not a beneficial efficacy. They conceived the leaders of the two component parties, by their extraordinary junction, to have sacrificed all public principle at the altar of ambition. They apprehended, that by forcing themselves into the counsels of their sove-

Constituents and strength of the coalition ministry.

They combine genius, political experience, and aristocratic influence.

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reign, they had thereby infringed the kingly prerogative, and in it the British constitution. Having so interpreted the views and conduct of administration, they inferred, that their measures would be directed to the preservation and extension of their own power, instead of the good of the country.

Meeting of parliament.

His majesty's speech recommends to their consideration British India, commerce, and revenue.

PARLIAMENT assembled on the 11th of November, and soon afforded an opportunity of considering the schemes of administration. His majesty's speech was short, but extremely comprehensive; the definitive treaties of peace had been concluded; the important and extensive inquiries long carried on respecting India affairs, were pursued with diligence, and the fruit of them would be expected in the provisions of parliamentary wisdom, to maintain and improve the valuable advantages which we derived from our oriental possessions, and to promote and secure the happiness of the native inhabitants of those provinces. The season of peace would call for their attention to every possible means of recruiting the strength of the nation, after such a long and expensive war. One of the first objects of deliberation was the security and increase of the revenue in the manner which should be least burdensome to the subjects. Dangerous frauds had prevailed, and daring outrages were committed respecting the collection of the public revenue; and to prevent the continuance of such depredations, it would be necessary to adopt new provisions. The house of commons were informed of the reduction of all the establishments as far as prudence would admit, of the closing expences requisite at such a time, and reminded of the necessity of supporting the national credit.

THE primary importance of these objects was undeniable; and an address consonant to the speech was unanimously passed in both houses. Mr. Pitt expressed his high approbation of the ends proposed by government, though he made some animadver-

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sions on the tardiness of ministers, in not having been farther advanced with measures for the accomplishment of such momentous purposes. On all these grand subjects, he counselled them to bring forward great, efficient, and permanent systems; as he highly applauded the ends which they professed to seek, he trusted the means which they would devise would be equally meritorious; in which case, they should have his warmest support. Mr. Fox, impressed with the very highest idea of Mr. Pitt's talents, declared, nothing could afford him more satisfaction as a minister, or proud exultation as a man, than to be honoured with the praise and support of Mr. Pitt.[c] He expressed very high approbation of the general principles which he had briefly sketched concerning the objects of their intended deliberation. He acknowledged, that India affairs could ill brook delay; through the industry and ability of their committee, however, the time which they had occupied was the means of affording parliament the most accurate and complete information; so that no assembly could be better acquainted with the subject on which they were called to deliberate: he concluded with announcing, that, on the 18th of November, he should propose a plan for the government of India.

East India bill of Mr. Fox.

On the day appointed, Mr. Fox moved the house for leave to bring in a bill for vesting the affairs of the East India company in the hands of certain commissioners, for the benefit of the proprietors and the public; and also a bill for the better government of the territorial possessions and dependencies in India. In the former of these propositions, a preamble stated, that disorders existed and increased in the management of the British territorial possessions, revenues, and commerce, in the East Indies; which diminished the prosperity of the na-

[c] Parliamentary Debates, 1783-4.

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Object, to vest the whole affairs of the company in certain commissioners to be appointed by parliament; and to administer commercial as well as territorial concerns.

tives, impaired and threatened with utter ruin the valuable interests of this nation. The government of the present directors and proprietors was to be suspended; they were to be deprived of the whole administration of their territorial and commercial affairs; of their books, papers, documents, and their house in Leadenhall-street. The total direction of all their concerns, mercantile, financial, and political, was henceforward to be vested in seven commissioners; namely, William earl Fitzwilliam, the right honourable Frederic Montague, lord George viscount Lewisham, the honourable George Augustus North, sir Gilbert Elliot, sir Henry Fletcher, and Robert Gregory, esq. These commissioners were to be appointed for the first time by the whole legislature; but afterwards by the crown: they were to hold their offices by the same tenure as the judges of England, during their good behaviour, and to be removed only by address from either house of parliament: they were to be assisted by seven directors; who should each possess at least two thousand pounds India stock, and have no mercantile concern with the company. The first seven were named in the bill: vacancies were to be supplied by a majority of the proprietors, on an open poll. Any or all of the assisting directors might be removed by five of the commissioners; and thus the commissioners were to hold the supreme direction and exclusive patronage of all India affairs. In the exercise of this immense power, they were required to come to a decision upon every question within a limited time, or to assign a specific reason for their delay. They must submit, once in every six months, an exact state of their accounts and establishments to both houses of parliament; they were never to vote by ballot, and must enter upon their journals the reasons of their vote. Such were the outlines of this celebrated bill. The proposed

plan

plan appeared to combine efficiency in the powers entrusted, openness in the required progress of its exercise, and responsibility that it should be employed for the intended purposes. If, therefore, the objects were beneficial to our Indian interests and to the whole British empire, and the persons chosen were completely qualified for executing the trust reposed, there can be no doubt that their powers were fully sufficient. This bill for the general management of Indian concerns, was accompanied by a second bill, the professed object of which was, to prevent all kinds of arbitrary and despotical proceedings from the administration of the territorial possessions; it defined the authority of the governor-general, suppressed all power of acting independently of his council, proscribed the delegation of any trust, and declared every existing British servant in India incompetent to the acquisition or exchange of any territory in behalf of the company; to the conclusion of any treaty of partition; to appoint to office any person removed for misdemeanor; to lend to native powers the company's troops; and to hire out any property to any civil officers of the company: it voided all monopolies, and declared every illegal present recoverable by any person for his own sole benefit. One part of the second bill particularly respected the zemindars or native landholders, secured to them an estate of inheritance, without an alteration of rents; and endeavoured to preclude all vexatious and usurious claims; to forbid mortgages, and to subject all doubtful demands to the examination and censure of the commissioners. It prescribed a mode for terminating the disputes between the nabob of Arcot and the rajah of Tanjore; and disqualified every person in the service of the company from sitting in the house of commons during the continuance of his employment, and for a certain specified term after his dismission. As the scheme of Mr. Fox proposed to take away

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Arguments for the bill.

from the India company the management of the whole and every part of their own commercial affairs, as well as the territorial possessions, its author drew his arguments to support it from two sources: the embarrassed state of the company's finances; the durable and comprehensive abuses which had prevailed in the government of India. The distressed situation of the company's affairs he endeavoured to prove from the following circumstances: they had applied the preceding year to parliament for pecuniary assistance; they had asked leave to borrow five hundred thousand pounds upon bonds; they had petitioned for three hundred thousand pounds in exchequer bills; and for the suspension of a demand upon them, on the part of government, for seven hundred thousand pounds due for customs. By an act of parliament, the directors were prohibited from accepting bills beyond three hundred thousand pounds, drawn in India; yet, at this very time, bills to the amount of more than two millions were on their way from India for acceptance. Their actual debt was eleven millions two hundred thousand pounds; and they had stock in hand, towards paying this immense incumbrance, only to the amount of about three millions two hundred thousand pounds. The result of this comparison was a balance against them of eight millions; a deficiency which was extremely alarming, when compared with the capital of the proprietors. He would not hesitate to declare the company actually bankrupt: if they were not assisted, they must unavoidably be ruined; and the fall of a body of merchants so extensive in their concerns, and so important in the eyes of Europe, must necessarily give a very alarming blow to our national credit. Parliament must permit the acceptance to be made, and interfere for their support; but it would be absurd in itself, and unjust to the nation, for legislature to grant them succour, without taking for the public security the

The company in a state of bankruptcy, and unfit for managing its own affairs.

total direction of their pecuniary affairs. This was an interference not only wise but absolutely necessary. Concerning the abuses that prevailed in the government of India, he began with the conduct of the company at home, the nature of their connexion with their officers abroad, the conduct of the servants in general, and of Mr. Hastings in particular, elucidated from the reports of the committee. The plan which he proposed would, he contended, prevent the recurrence of such abuses, promote the prosperity of the British interests, and change the condition of the natives from oppression and misery to security and comfort.

The enormous abuses of its servants, and distresses of India.

The first most strenuous, and powerful opposer of the bill was Mr. Pitt. The reasons which he urged against it were reducible to two general heads. "The proposed scheme," he said, "annihilated chartered rights, and created a new and immense body of influence unknown to the British constitution." He admitted that India wanted reform; but not such a reform as broke through every principle of equity and justice. The bill proposed to disfranchise the members, and confiscate the property of the East India company; it required directors, trustees chosen by proprietors for the behalf of those constituents, and under their control, to surrender all lands, tenements, houses, books, records, charters, instruments, vessels, goods, money, and securities, to persons over whom the owners were to possess no power of interference in the disposal of their own property; on what principle of law or justice could such a confiscation be defended? The rights of the company were conveyed in a charter expressed in the clearest and strongest terms that could be conceived. It was clearer, stronger, and better guarded in point of expression, than the charter of the bank of England; the right by which our gracious sovereign held the sceptre of these kingdoms, was not more

The bill is opposed by Mr. Pitt.

Arguments against the bill, that it is a violation of chartered rights without the justification of necessity;

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fully confirmed, nor farther removed from the possibility of all plausible question. The principle of this bill once established, what security had the other public companies of the kingdom? What security had the bank of England? What security had the national creditors, or the public corporations? or, indeed, what assurance could we have for the great charter itself, the foundation of all our privileges, and all our liberties? The power indeed was pretended to be created in trust for the benefit of the proprietors; but, in case of the grossest abuse of trust, to whom was the appeal? To the proprietors? No; but to a majority of either house of parliament, which the most drivelling minister could not fail to secure with the patronage of about two millions sterling given by this bill. But the proposition was still more objectionable in another way, it was calculated to increase the influence of the minister to an enormous and alarming degree. Seven commissioners chosen ostensibly by parliament, but really by administration, were to involve in the vortex of their authority the whole treasure of India. These poured forth like an irresistible torrent upon this country, would sweep away our liberties, and all we could call our own.

and the formation of an influence dependent on the present ministers.

By Mr. Dundas;

Mr. Dundas argued, that the immediate tendency of the bill was so far from being to increase the influence of the crown, that it must inevitably overbear its power: it created a fourth estate, which would overturn the balance of the three established by the constitution. The opposers of the bill proceeded to attack its author's motives. Mr. Fox was a man of the most splendid ability, the most intrepid and daring spirit, and unbounded ambition. He professed himself a party-man, and it was a leading article in his political creed, that Britain ought to be governed by a party: to perpetuate such a government was the design of the present scheme. This bill exhibited all the most prominent

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prominent features of its author's character and sentiments: its end was perpetual dictatorship to himself; the projected means were the whole influence of India possessed and exercised by the members and agents of a party which were totally at his devotion. The motives of the coalition were before easily divined; new success encouraged them to unfold their intentions, and their designs became fully manifested. To force his way to the supreme direction of his majesty's government, Mr. Fox had coalesced with those statesmen whom he had uniformly professed to reprobate; he headed them in censuring that peace, which, in less trying circumstances, he uniformly professed to recommend; and thus found an opportunity of attaining the power which he through that coalition sought. His views extending as he advanced, he now proposed to make his power perpetual and uncontrollable. Such was the opinion which Messrs. Dundas and Pitt, and their supporters, delivered concerning Mr. Fox's East India bill.

who charges Mr. Fox with seeking perpetual dictatorship.

THE combined force of philosophy, eloquence, and poetry, was employed by Mr. Burke, in supporting this grand project of his friend. A considerable portion of his own reasoning was exerted to controvert the arguments drawn from the annihilation of the company's charter: he admitted, to the fullest extent, that the charter of the East India corporation had been sanctioned by the king and parliament; that the company had bought it, and honestly paid for it; and that they had every right to it which such a sanction and such a purchase could convey. Having granted this position to the opponents of the bill, he maintained, that notwithstanding that sanction and purchase, the proposed change ought to take place. He proceeded on the great and broad grounds of ethics, arguing that NO SPECIAL COVENANT, HOWEVER SANCTIONED, CAN AUTHORISE A VIOLATION

Burke's celebrated speech on the extent and bounds of chartered rights.

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OF THE LAWS OF MORALITY; if a covenant operate to the misery of mankind, to oppression and injustice, the general obligation to prevent wickedness is antecedent and superior to any special obligation to perform a covenant: parliament had sold all they had a right to sell,—an exclusive privilege to trade; but not a privilege to rob and oppress; and if what they disposed of for the purposes of commerce was made the instrument of oppression and pillage, it was their duty, as the guardians of the conduct and happiness of all within the sphere of their influence and control, to prevent so pernicious an operation. After laying down this as a fundamental principle, he proceeded to argue, that there had been, and were, the most flagrants acts of oppression in India, by the servants of the company; that the whole system was oppressive from the beginning of the acquisition of territorial possessions: he entered into a detail of the principal instances of rapine, violence, and tyranny, which were attributed to the English; and dwelt with superior energy and pathos on those acts of which he alleged Mr. Hastings to be guilty. No one undertook to deny, as an abstract proposition, that charters or any covenants contravening the principles of morality, and bringing misery on mankind, ought to be annulled; but the allegation was denied respecting the charter of the East India company. THE BILL, it was affirmed, PROPOSED CONFISCATION WITHOUT PROOF OF DELINQUENCY. The proprietors and directors petitioned the house that their securities and property might not be forfeited without evidence of criminality. They desired, that before the house passed a bill which would act as a condemnation, they should prove the guilt. One reason adduced by Mr. Fox for the proscription of their rights was, that they had mismanaged their own affairs, and were insolvent; they denied the alleged bankruptcy, and offered to prove

Allegations against Mr. Hastings.

Petitions of the India company.

by

by a statement of their demands and effects, that though somewhat embarrassed, their assets far exceeded their debts; and prayed their situation might be fully inspected before a bill, proceeding on an assumption of their being bankrupts, should be passed. LET NOT, they said, A PARLIAMENTARY DOCKET BE STRUCK WITHOUT GIVING US AN OPPORTUNITY OF CONVINCING EQUITY THAT WE CAN PAY EVERY CREDITOR TWENTY SHILLINGS IN THE POUND. The remonstrating entreaties of the company, and all the opposition in the house of commons, were unavailing: on the 8th of December, the bill passed the house by the large majority of two hundred and eight to one hundred and two.[d] The next day Mr. Fox, attended by a great number of members, presented the bill at the bar of the house of lords. When it came to the peers, it met, if not with an abler opposition, with a much more numerous in proportion to the number of the assembly. Great force of eloquence and reasoning were exerted on both sides; rarely indeed was there a fuller attendance, and perhaps never did a greater assemblage of ability display itself in our house of lords, than on so momentous a question, that engaged, on the one side, an able body of peers headed by lord Thurlow and lord Camden; on the other a no less able body, headed by lord Loughborough and lord Mansfield. In the house of commons, however, the arguments on both sides had been so completely exhausted, that little novelty appropriate to the question could be brought forward even by such powers of genius. Lord Thurlow spoke to the attack on Hastings,

The bill passes the commons by a great majority.

[d] In the closing debate on this bill in the house of commons, Mr. Flood, a very eminent orator in the Irish parliament, lately chosen a member for Winchester, first spoke in the British parliament. Emphatic in his delivery, both pompous and vehement in his manner, he appeared rather to demand than to solicit the attention of the house. Such a mode of elocution, however valuable the matter might be, and cogent the arguments, certainly exposed the speaker to ridicule. This engine was very happily played upon him in the poignant wit, keen and strong satire of Mr. Courtney; who, without invalidating his opponent's arguments, silenced the oratory of Mr. Flood in the British house of commons.

Which

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which had been repeated in the house of peers. If (said he) he be a depopulator of provinces, if he be a plunderer, and an enemy to the human race, let his crimes be dragged into the light of day, and let him be punished, but not condemned without a trial.[e] Meanwhile, the bill had begun to produce a considerable alarm in the country. Other bodies now followed the example of the East India company, in petitioning against a measure which they considered as an atrocious violation of private property. In the house of peers the opponents of the bill proposed to defer its consideration, for several days, until they should have time to receive more adequate information; its supporters were very urgent for the speedy completion of the scheme; but, the former prevailing, it was deferred. The bill was now become extremely obnoxious to the public; the majority of the house of peers exhibited the sentiment of a much greater proportion of a majority of the nation. The people appeared to have adopted a totally different opinion from the house of commons.[f]. The motion for a second reading took place on the 15th, and the house being adjourned to the 17th, the question was put for the commitment, and

Other corporate bodies petition against the violation of a charter.

The bill becomes obnoxious to the public;

is rejected by the lords.

[e] Mr. Hastings (he said) was one of the most venerable characters that this country had produced: he had served the East India company for thirty-three years, and twelve years as president at Bengal. He possessed a most extensive knowledge of the languages, the manners, the politics, and the revenues of Indostan. He was a man whose integrity, honour, firmness of mind, and perseverance, had encountered difficulties that would have subdued the spirit of any other man, and had surmounted every obstacle; no impediment, no opposition, could have been more formidable than that of the commission, which seemed to have been sent out for the express purpose of thwarting and opposing all his measures. When he considered the scene of confusion that ensued, the factious and personal spirit by which these men had been animated from the hour of their landing, he sincerely wished they had died before they had set foot in India. But Mr. Hastings had been able to overcome so arduous a trial, and such was the vigour of our government in Bengal; such were the regulations for the administration of justice in the provinces, and such the economical arrangements formed by the civil and military departments, that he did not believe it would be in the power of the folly and ignorance of the most favourite clerks Mr. Fox's directors could send out to throw Bengal into confusion in the term that was assigned for the duration of his bill. See Parliamentary Debates, Dec. 1783.

[f] See a periodical paper of those times, entitled, the Political Herald, which was edited by the elegant pen of Godwin, but supported by the abler pen of Gilbert Stewart, and frequently invigorated by the masculine strength of Wm. Thomson.

carried

carried against the minister by a majority of ninety-five to seventy-six; and thus Mr. Fox's celebrated India bill, after passing the house of commons, was rejected by the lords. The conduct of the peers which, in voting contrary to the house of commons, concurred with the popular voice, was represented by the ministerial party as arising not from conviction, but an extrinsic influence. His majesty, on investigating the nature, tendency, and probable consequences of the bill introduced by Mr. Fox, was understood to be inimical to its adoption. It was conceived, that the more our king reflected on the subject, he was the more deeply impressed with the mischievous effects of the scheme in question, that he thought it would overturn the balance of the constitution; and that under such an impression, he very freely delivered his sentiments to counsellors whom he did not think members of the coalition confederacy. Among those who enjoyed the greatest degree of the royal confidence was earl Temple, a nobleman of considerable talents, high character, and an ample fortune; totally unconnected with any party junto, and thereby not only capable, but most probably disposed, to give the best advice. A report prevailed, that in a private conference with his majesty, this nobleman, with the candour and honesty of a faithful and conscientious counsellor, had delivered his sentiments to the king; and that they coincided with those which the illustrious personage himself entertained. The report farther added, that the opinion of his majesty having been communicated to various peers, had influenced their votes. The clamour against such advisers was revived by ministry; and it was asserted that, but for these, a majority in the lords would have forwarded the bill proportionate to that which had carried it through the house of commons. This rumour respecting the interference of the sovereign, was never authenticated; it however was believed by

Causes assigned by ministers for the rejection of the bill.

The bill alleged to be disagreeable to his majesty.

Reputed interference of lord Temple.

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is canvassed in the house of commons.

by the supporters of the bill, and deemed the means of its rejection. The reports were considered by the coalition party of so great importance, as to be the foundation of several resolutions. On the 17th of December, the coalition speakers expatiated on secret influence, which, according to their assumption [g], still existed. Mr. William Baker made a motion, seconded by lord Maitland, importing, that it was now necessary to declare, that to mention any opinion, or pretended opinion of the king, upon any bill or other proceeding in either house of parliament, with a view to influence the votes of the members, was a high crime and misdemeanor, derogatory to the honour of the crown, a breach of the fundamental privileges of parliament, and subversive of the constitution of the country. Mr. Pitt argued on the impropriety of a legislative assembly proceeding on unauthenticated rumours; that monster, public report, was daily fabricating a thousand absurdities and improbabilities; and it was the greatest sarcasm upon every thing serious and respectable, to suffer her to intrude on the national business, and for the house to follow her through all her shapes and extravagancies. He was asked, how ministers were to act when circumvented, as they complained of having been, by secret influence, and when the royal opinion was inimical to their measures. In his judgment, their duty, in a situation, thus dishonourable and inefficient, was obvious and indispensable. The moment they could not answer for their measures, let them retire: the servants of the crown were worse than useless whenever they were without responsibility. Mr. Fox endeavoured to prove, that the present resolutions were necessary to mark the independence of parliament; and to decide whether it was to be governed by the wisdom and free choice of its members, or by the dictates

[g] Authentic and impartial history must consider the assertion concerning secret influence, as an assumption, because the allegation was neither admitted nor proved.

of

of the crown. Taking for granted the existence of secret influence, he exercised his eloquence in describing the evils which it would produce. We are (he said) robbed of our rights, with a menace of immediate destruction before our face: from this moment farewell to every independent measure. Whenever the liberties of the people, the rights of private property, or the still more sacred privileges of personal safety, are vindicated by the house, the hopes of the public, anxious, eager, and panting for the issue, are to be whispered away, and dispersed to every wind of heaven, by the breath of secret influence. A parliament thus fettered and controlled, instead of limiting, extends beyond all limit and precedent the prerogative of the crown, and has no longer any use but to register the decrees of despotism, and the arbitrary mandates of a favourite. Thus, according to Mr. Fox, the constitution of England was to become despotical, if the house of commons did not reprobate a secret influence which rumour[h] only alleged to exist. A majority of one hundred and fifty-three to eighty voted for the resolution. CHAP. XXXI. 1783.

THE conduct of his majesty evidently demonstrated that he was not only extremely averse to the East India bill, but highly displeased with its author. On the 18th of December, at twelve at night, he sent a message to the two secretaries of state, intimating that his majesty had no farther occasion for their services, and directing that the seals of office should be delivered to him by the under secretaries, as a personal interview would be disagreeable. Early the next morning letters of dismission, signed Temple, were sent to the other members of the cabinet. Immediately the places of first lord of the treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer, were Ministers are dismissed.

[h] The report was, that a circular card, supposed to have been written by lord Temple, had been transmitted to various peers, purporting his majesty's disapprobation of Mr. Fox's bill, as subversive of the power and dignity of the crown.

conferred

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conferred on Mr. William Pitt; lord Temple received the seals as secretary of state; and earl Gower was appointed lord president of the council. On the 22d lord Temple resigned the seals of his office, and they were delivered to lord Sidney, as secretary of state for the home department; and to the marquis of Carmarthen for the foreign. Lord Thurlow was appointed high chancellor of Britain; the duke of Rutland, lord privy seal; lord viscount Howe, first lord of the admiralty; and the duke of Richmond, master-general of the ordnance; Mr. William Grenville, and lord Mulgrave, succeeded Mr. Burke in the pay-office; and Mr. Henry Dundas was appointed to the office of treasurer of the navy.

Character of Mr. Fox's East India bill:

THUS terminated the coalition administration, owing its downfal to Mr. Fox's East India bill. In whatever light we view this celebrated measure, we must allow it to be the effort of an expanded and towering genius. Whether the object was beneficial or injurious, the means were great, comprehensive, and efficacious. If, with its framer and supporters, we consider the East India company as guilty of the grossest misconduct in the administration of their affairs; as having brought themselves to a state of insolvency, and thus rendering it necessary for their principal creditor to interfere for his own security, and to prevent them from utterly ruining themselves, the plan was efficient: the company could no longer mismanage their affairs, for Mr. Fox left them none to administer. What the author said of the whole bill, applies to it with great truth: IT WAS NO HALF MEASURE. If the territorial concerns of the company had been so madly, wickedly, and destructively administered by the company's weakness and corruption, and the vices of its servants, the powers proposed by Mr. Fox to be conferred upon his seven friends, rendering them sole, supreme, and complete directors of British India, were thoroughly adequate to

whether right or wrong, decisive and efficient:

thoroughly adapted to its end, whether good or bad:

to every purpose of correction of misconduct, prevention of abuses, and punishment of malversation: his provisions for the zemindars tended most effectually to give to those landholders the security of British subjects. The opponents of the bill, while they reprobated its tendency and design, fully admitted that extraordinary exertions of genius had been employed in adapting it to its end. Considering it as intended to make its seven executors lords of so great a part of the British empire, and its inventor imperial master of the whole, they allowed, that in its general principle, and in its particular provisions, relations, and dependencies, it was most skilfully, ingeniously, and completely fitted to establish in these realms, the government of an oligarchical confederacy, headed by Charles James Fox. Impartial history, without entirely adopting the opinion of either party, must see and exhibit in this plan a most forcible efficacy, that might operate in two ways: on the one hand, as its supporters asserted, it was thoroughly calculated for preventing the recurrence of such evils as had been recently prevalent: and on the other, it was no less obviously and directly fitted to confer on Mr. Fox and his connexions, a power new in the British constitution, far surpassing that which had before belonged to any body or estate under our polity, and without that control on which has depended, and depends, the integrity and efficacy of our several establishments and our political system. Concerning Mr. Fox's motives, the historian, like every other observer of human conduct, will infer intention according to the nature and tendency of the measure, compared with the circumstances of the case, and character of the agent. Examining the scheme, knowing that the ambition most frequently prevalent in great minds occupied no inconsiderable share of Mr. Fox's heart, and perceiving the bill so well framed to gratify that passion, he will not hesitate

fitted to secure to Mr. Fox continuance in power, however that power might be used.

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hesitate to assign the love of power as one of the motives. Aware, however, that an inventor, ardent in the promotion of a scheme which has occupied his affections and faculties, and engaged in contemplating its direct and immediate adaptation to proposed ends, may overlook more indirect operations, or more distant consequences; he may conclude, that Mr. Fox did not view, in their whole extent and force, the effects which, unless arrested in its course, the project might have produced. The most probable account which impartial candour can present concerning this important subject of history, appears to be the following: Mr. Fox had acceded to the whig doctrine of governing this country by an aristocratical confederacy. Conscious of his own extraordinary talents, and desirous of that power which would have employed and displayed them, he expected and sought to be leader of an administration which should be supported by such a combination. The sovereign he well knew was averse to a party government. The misfortunes of the war having rendered the ministry of lord North very unpopular, the whig combination came into power. Finding, in the promotion of lord Shelburne, a deviation from the plans which the whigs had delineated, Mr. Fox and his party resigned. Their own combination not being sufficient to secure them the direction of public affairs, the whig party joined another, before hostile; and from their combined powers, forced the practical adoption of their maxim of ruling by a confederacy. Aware of the disagreeableness of such a ministry to him in whom the constitution vested the choice of executive servants, and naturally apprehending that he would avail himself of an opportunity to exert his own free choice, Mr. Fox, in framing his bill, appears to have endeavoured to guard against the probability of such an event. The permanence of Mr. Fox's connexion in administration, would evi-

dently

dently be a morally certain effect of his bill; and, therefore, may fairly be assigned as one of its principal objects. Mr. Fox's opponents illustrated their conceptions of his scheme, by comparing him to Oliver Cromwel, Julius Cæsar, Catiline, and other celebrated projectors of usurpation. But an attentive consideration of his character, dispositions, and habits, and, above all, his uniform conduct, by no means justifies the charge of *solitary* ambition. Social in private life, Mr. Fox has always courted association in politics; ambitious of sway, he has sought not only to acquire it by, but to enjoy it with, a party. Besides, had he been ever so desirous of the solitary dominion of protector or dictator, he must have known, that in Britain he never could have attained so uncontrolled a power. His sagacity would not have suffered his designs so very far to outgo every probability of success. Confining the proposed schemes of this great man somewhat near the bounds of probable execution, the historian may fairly venture to affirm, that he intended, by his India bill, to secure the continuance of power to himself, his whig confederacy, and their new allies; and that the whole series of his conduct was a practical adoption of the doctrines of his friend Mr. Burke, in his "Thoughts on the Discontents," exhibiting all the beauties of poetry and depth of philosophy, to minister to party politics, and applying the energies of his genius, the stores of his wisdom, and the fascination of his fancy, to shew that Britain, disregarding the choice of the king, or the talents of the subject, ought to be governed by a whig association. On the whole it is evident, that one of the chief objects of the coalition was, to establish the united partie in the management of government. It is no less manifest, that the East India bill both tended, and was designed to secure to the confederacy the continuance of power. So far impartial history must concur with the opponents

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Outcry against Mr. Fox.

Impartial estimate of this political scheme.

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of the illustrious Fox. But the reasonableness of the censure, and even obloquy which he thereby incurred, is much more questionable. That Mr. Fox loved power is very obvious, and abstractly neither deserving of praise nor censure. There is little doubt that he was not the minister of the king's predilection and personal choice. The appointment of his executive servants is certainly by the constitution vested in his majesty; but various cases have occurred in the history of England, in which it was not only requisite, but necessary, for the king, in the exercise of his prerogative, to sacrifice private prepossessions to general good: such an event has happened, and always may happen under a free constitution, of which the object is the welfare of the community. The court doctrine at this time, that Mr. Fox and his adherents merited the severest reprobation, *because* they wished to administer the government contrary to the inclination of the king, is by no means obviously true. The unbiassed historian must consider the question on the broad grounds of expediency. Had or had not Charles James Fox, in his parliamentary and executorial conduct, shewn such intellectual talents, such force, energy, and decision of mind, as would have rendered him a momentous accession to the counsels of the nation, when the state of affairs required the exertion of the greatest abilities which it contained. Those who thought that he had manifested such talents and qualities, were, by patriotic duty, bound to support the continuance, or attempt the restoration of his power. Mr. Fox, though not thirty-five years of age, was an old senator: for ten years his wisdom, viewing situation and conduct, had predicted events and results with an accuracy almost prophetic. His lessons as a statesman, he had received from moral and political science, thorough conversancy with the British constitution, government, and interests, impressed more forcibly on his mind

mind by practical contemplation of the errors of systems, the insufficiency of plans, and the imbecility of execution, followed to their fatal effects. *For only eleven months and a quarter*, in two cabinets, had he been minister. With the marquis of Rockingham, he, in four months, had pacified and enfranchised the discontented and oppressed Ireland; he had prepared for terminating a ruinous war; and had promoted retrenchment of the expenditure, which was so burdensome to the nation. In the coalition ministry, he had persevered in promoting economical regulations, which were so much wanted; and had begun successfully to move stagnant commerce. His India bill, even if admitted to be wrong in its object and principle, yet was certainly grand, comprehensive, and efficient. If there was error, it arose, not from the defect of weakness, but the excess of strength. It displayed a range of survey, a fertility and force of invention, a boldness and decision of plan, an openness and directness of execution, that stamped its author as a man of sublime genius, who fearlessly unfolded and published his conceptions. The impartial narrator, using the best of his judgment, must disapprove of the infringement of charters[1], at least till proof was established that their objects had been violated, or deem the new power created greater than was either necessary for its purpose, or consistent with the balance of the constitution; but must acknowledge, that its territorial operation would have been thoroughly and immediately efficacious. The perspicuity of the whole, and every clause, manifested the extent and bounds of the delegated power, defined the mode of its exercise, and the open responsibility under which the trust

[1] I have been informed by a member of the party that some very eminent senators belonging to it, especially a gentleman who has since risen to be one of its heads, privately advised Mr. Fox to leave the commercial management to the company. If that advice had been followed the chief ground of popular reproach would have been prevented, and Mr. Fox might have continued to be minister.

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was to be discharged; and in marking the line of duty, shewed the unavoidable consequences of transgression; by precluding the probability of unpunished guilt, it tended to prevent the recurrence of oppression; ascertaining the tenure, and securing the rights of property, it would stimulate industry, and render British India infinitely more productive to the proprietors and nation, besides diffusing comfort and happiness to the natives, so long the objects of an iniquity which was disgraceful to the British name. These were the benefits which must have obviously resulted from the plan of Mr. Fox. The confiscation of charters could only be defended on the ground of necessity, and Mr. Fox had not evinced that necessity, and was therefore precipitate and blameable in proposing to proceed upon an assumption, in a case of so high an importance both as to policy and justice. But his propositions on this part of the subject did not necessarily imply unfair intentions. The influence which must have accrued to the confederacy might have been formidable to the constitution, but if it proved so, its dangers must have arisen from the legislators, the guardians of our polity, as to these the proposed commissioners were to be amenable. The new influence might increase ministerial majorities in parliament, but great means of such an augmentation must have arisen from any plan for taking the territorial possessions under the direction of the British government. His East India scheme, both in itself and in combination with his other acts, and the series of his conduct, displayed those talents and qualities, which, when joined, place the possessor in the highest rank of statesmen, and shew him fully competent to render to his country the most momentous services. The plan itself is of a mixed character, and liable to many strong objections; yet the impartial examiner will not easily discover, in the whole of this scheme, reasons to convince him, that

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because Mr. Fox proposed this plan for governing India, it was beneficial to the country to be deprived of the executorial efforts of his transcendent abilities. The historian, unconnected with party, and considering merely the will and power of individuals or bodies to promote the public good, must lament what truth compels him to record, that a personage equalled by so few in extent of capacity and force of character, in fitness for benefiting the nation, during a political life of thirty-five years, should have been enjoyed as a minister by his country only *once for three months and a half, and again for seven months and three quarters.* The situation of the empire required the united efforts of the greatest political abilities, but Britain was not destined to possess the executorial exertions OF BOTH her most consummate statesmen.

Mr. William Pitt prime minister, in a minority of the house of commons: the tenure of his office, his personal talents and character, without adventitious aid.

BY the dismissal of ministers the country found itself in a new situation, about to be governed by an administration, which a very powerful majority in the house of commons thwarted. The new prime minister was a young man in the twenty-fifth year of his age, supported by no family influence, or political confederacy; having no adventitious props; resting solely on his own ability, aided by those whose admiration and confidence his intellectual and moral character had secured; without any means of extending his influence and increasing the number of his friends, but those to be found in his own head and heart. If talents, integrity, and conduct, could not create a general confidence and support, which might overbear a particular combination, he must fall. The splendid fame of the father, it is true, had spread an early lustre round the son; but hereditary glory would have little availed against such a host, without similar virtues. Able individuals supported him, but against so compact and strong a phalanx, little would have been their weight, unless invigorated, directed, and led

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by extraordinary talents. The majority in the house of commons was very great, and there was little prospect of its being materially reduced. It was obvious that no ministry could be of long duration, without the support of a house of commons: it was readily perceived, that either ministry or parliament must be dissolved. The consequences of a dissolution depended simply upon the prevailing sentiment throughout the nation. Mr. Burke has remarked, that the house of commons ought to be *an express image of the opinions and feelings of the people.* If in the present case such a sympathy existed between representatives and constituents, dissolution could answer no purpose, as a majority friendly to the coalition must be returned; but Mr. Fox's party appeared not to entertain sanguine hopes from such an appeal.

Unpopularity of Mr. Fox and the coalition.

HAVING endeavoured to the best of my judgment to exhibit the conduct of Mr. Fox and his supporters as it really was, it is necessary, in order to shew the connexion of events, to exhibit the impression which it had made on the majority of the people; as that impression, much more than the real merits of their policy, produced their permanent exclusion from the councils of their sovereign. A comprehensive biographer, who should view the whole conduct and character of Fox, estimate excellence and defect, and strike an impartial balance, after allowing grounds of censure, must unquestionably perceive that there remained an immense surplus of subject for transcendent admiration. But perhaps there never was an eminent man whose actions and character, viewed in partial and detached lights, could lead an observer to grosser misconception of the whole. Both his private and public life were of a mixed nature. The most sublime genius, the most simplifying and profound wisdom, did not preclude the indulgence of propensities, and the recurrence of acts, diametrically opposite to reason and

and sound judgment. Ardent benevolence and patriotism did not prevent the encouragement, by both precept and example, of practices and habits injurious to the individual, and, according to the extent of their influence, prejudicial to the public welfare. Just and honourable himself, his amusements and relaxations promoted vices tending to render their votaries unjust and dishonourable. In every part of his conduct, Mr. Fox was extremely open; if there was ground of blame, it must be known, as no endeavours were used for concealment. His supereminent excellencies could be apprehended but very vaguely and indistinctly, unless by comparatively few; but his faults were obvious to the most vulgar examiners. As the multitude of all ranks and denominations were incompetent to form a judgment of such a man themselves, they took up their opinions upon the report and authority of others; these were favourable or unfavourable according to the sentiments and wishes of their authors. Where his enemies were the teachers of the opinions, in partial views of his conduct, they found plausible grounds of censure and obloquy. Besides the foibles of his private life, his public conduct afforded ample materials to advocates, who chose to assail his reputation. From the time that the American war, by the losses which it produced, and the burdens which it imposed, brought home to the experience and feelings of the people, became unpopular, the most ardent and powerful promoter of peace was regarded as the patriot who was to extricate his country from impending ruin. His popularity became still higher, as he procured a vote for the discontinuance of the war, and expelled the obnoxious ministers from the councils of the king. Under the government of the whigs, the people expected the empire to recover its ancient splendor, and themselves their former comforts and prosperity. The reforming and improving acts of

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the Rockingham administration confirmed this opinion. When, on the appointment of lord Shelburne, Mr. Fox withdrew his abilities from the councils of his country, many began to be staggered in their conviction of his patriotism: but when the coalition took place, the gross and undistinguishing multitude was satisfied, that a junction between two parties and two men formerly so hostile, must be bad and mischievous in itself. Its able opponents saw, that the mere junction was neither good nor ill, but that the justness of censure must depend on the objects and subsequent conduct of the confederacy; yet aware, that this reasoning was too refined for the comprehension of the multitude, with great skill, dexterity, and effect, they re-echoed, "*the monstrous inconsistency of the coalition;*" and when its members came into administration, impressed great numbers of the people with a belief, that a ministry so formed must be unprincipled and worthless, however able and powerful. The receipt-tax drawing hourly on their pockets, though in so petty sums, teazed and fretted their minds already sore. The East India bill, in its objectionable parts, the infringement of charters, and the forcible interference in the administration of a mercantile company's affairs, was perfectly intelligible to the most common apprehensions; shocked the ideas of a trading people, and suggested probable cases, which by obvious analogies could be brought home to their own feelings; whereas the benefit that might accrue to British India and its native inhabitants, much less attracted their attention, affected their imaginations, or interested their passions. A plain farmer, manufacturer, or tradesman, could easily conceive the hardship of having his affairs subjected to trustees not chosen by himself, when he knew or believed himself to be solvent, and competent to the administration of his own concerns; while the benefit that might accrue to the inhabitants of Hindostan

Hindostan were not likely to make a very deep impression on his mind. In Mr. Fox's East India bill, the real or probable evils, like the defects of his general character, were manifest to a common understanding; but its real or probable benefits, like the excellencies of his general character, required comprehensive views, penetrating sagacity, and great abilities, to estimate and appreciate. Mr. Fox himself, and his supporters, ardent in pursuing their great scheme, though they anticipated, and, at least, with uncommon ingenuity controverted in parliament[k], the principal objections that were urged; yet they did not sufficiently regard the impression made out of parliament by these objections, until it was too late. Mr. Fox in this as in many other measures, attending to what was great and momentous, overlooked various particulars which, though apparently little, were really important. His enlightened mind, valuing the literature for which he himself and many of his supporters and coadjutors were so eminently distinguished, and aware of the importance of the press as a political engine, had secured the ablest contributors to periodical publications.[l]

Classes hostile to Mr. Fox.

But these efforts of genius were not directed to the objects wherein assistance was chiefly wanted: they were addressed to scholars, statesmen, and philosophers, instead of the great mass of the people, among whom an alarm against the coalition was spreading itself so widely. The opposite party, with more dexterous skill, disseminated writings which simplified arguments or allegations to the comprehension of the multitude, and impressed their feelings. In running the race of popularity, the anti-coalitionists, by skilful direction to the goal, surpassed the forcible and energetic movements of the coalitionists deviating from the course. Many

k See Burke's speech on chartered rights.

l See the magazines and newspapers of the time, and also the Political Herald.

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of the independent land-holders[m], merchants, and manufacturers, partook of the alarm, and tended to increase it through the nation; that great and opulent body, the dissenters, were, with few exceptions, inimical to the coalition, and this their principal scheme. All those who were privately or domestically dependent on the king, attached to his person, and desirous of gratifying his wishes; all who by habit, predilection, or office, were more connected with the splendor of the court than the politics of the cabinet, were inimical to a party which they conceived or knew to be disagreeable to the sovereign. But the principal source of popularity to the anti-coalition party, was the character of its juvenile leader, who was conceived equal to Mr. Fox himself in talents; known to be so much superior in moral habits; free from the imputation of vice or of political inconsistency; and presumed, from his character and conduct, more likely to apply with undeviating constancy to public business, and with more steady patriotism to seek the national good, than a personage whose extraordinary abilities might be interrupted or perverted by his foibles and propensities, and the connexions and associates which these generated. The character and habits of Mr. Pitt were much more favourable to the promotion of confidence among the monied men than those of his opponent, and in his late defence of chartered rights he was regarded as the champion of mercantile corporations, which enhanced his popularity among individual capitalists. There was a class of men distinguished by the title of the king's friends, emanating, according to the whig hypothesis, from the secret influence junto, which during so great a part of the reign had been conceived to exist, and to direct public and more ostensible

[m] A treatise by sir William Pulteney, very vigorously written, was powerfully efficacious in impressing on the public a detestation of the plan, and a dread of its author.

politicians.

politicians. To these the Rockingham party, which they considered as a hostile phalanx, was much more disagreeable than the band which, after the death of Chatham, was headed by earls Temple and Shelburne. Mr. Pitt, as a member of the Temple party, was much more agreeable to these courtiers than Mr. Fox, member of the whig party. He had not joined the whig administration of 1782, and in 1783 had spoken and voted with those that were understood to occupy the greatest share of royal favour. Pleasing and engaging as Mr. Fox's manners are, yet his character is too open, and perhaps too unguarded, for the reserve and caution indispensable at courts, where a Mrs. Masham may overturn a Marlborough. Mr. Pitt resembling Fox in the highest talents for the great politics of the cabinet, somewhat surpassed him in the secondary politics of the court. Though too independent and dignified for the habitual suppleness of a mere instrument of splendor, yet prudent as well as able, he had the address and concealment of a skilful courtier. To this statement of comparative personal virtues, a retrospect of their fathers, allowing the just merit to the one, but attributing unproved demerit to the other, produced, with the multitude, a great additional influence in favour of Mr. Pitt.[n] From all these causes, the tide of popularity ran so high in favour of the new ministers, as to render an appeal to the nation desirable to them, and hurtful to their adversaries. But such a measure was not immediately practicable with safety to the country; supplies were urgently wanted for the public service, and could not be deferred till the meeting of a new parliament. The majority in opposition could refuse the supplies, in order to retard dissolution.

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[n] The *two pair of portraits*, by Mr. Horne Tooke, with the greatest pungency and force converge this kind of argument; but in point of justness, resemble the labours of an arbitrator, who debiting one side without allowing any credit, and crediting the other without charging any debit, should publish the result as an award exhibiting a fair balance of accounts.

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1783. The land-tax bill was then pending; the 20th of December, the day after the change of ministry, had been appointed for the third reading; the majority, however, agreed to put off its consideration. On the 22d, the house sat as a *committee on the state of the nation:* a resolution was moved by Mr. Erskine for an address to his majesty, to state the alarming reports of a speedy dissolution; mentioning the territorial and commercial affairs of the India company as requiring their immediate attention; and praying his majesty to suffer them to proceed on the important business recommended to them in his speech from the throne; to hearken to the voice of his faithful commons, and not to the secret advices of persons who might have private interests of their own, separate from the true advantage of the king and his people. His majesty's answer, delivered on the 24th of December, admitted the urgency of the subject stated in their address, and pledged the royal promise, not to interrupt the house, either by prorogation or dissolution. The majority was not satisfied with this answer of the king, which appeared to them to afford no certain prospect that his majesty would long abstain from exerting the prerogative vested in him by the constitution. They therefore proceeded with precautions against this event: by an ACT OF PARLIAMENT, the lords of the treasury were empowered to permit, at discretion, the directors to accept bills from India: the house of commons passed a *resolution* to prohibit the lords of the treasury from accepting any more bills from India, till the company should prove to that house that they had sufficient means for their payments, after having discharged their current demands, and the debt due to the public. The amount of this prohibition was, that the house of commons assumed to itself the power of suspending an act of parliament. On the

1784. 26th, the house adjourned to the 12th of January:

during the recess, each party was employed in strengthening itself, and in forming its political measures. When parliament was assembled, Mr. Fox moved, that the committee on the state of the nation should be resumed. After several subordinate motions, a resolution was proposed, that, in the present situation of his majesty's dominions, it was peculiarly necessary there should be an administration which had the confidence of that house and the public. In this motion his majesty's name had been omitted. Mr. Dundas, in order to point out the real spirit of the resolution, as well as the actual state of the case; and, that not the confidence of one branch, but the whole legislature was requisite to ministers; proposed an amendment, substituting, instead of the words confidence of *this house and the public*, "confidence of the crown, the parliament, and the people:" the amendment was rejected, and the original resolution was passed. Another proposition was immediately adopted, to the following purport: "that the late changes in his majesty's councils had been preceded by dangerous and universal reports, that the sacred name of the king had been unconstitutionally used to affect the deliberations of parliament; and that the appointments made were accompanied by circumstances new and extraordinary, and such as did not engage the confidence of that house." This resolution manifestly referred to the report concerning earl Temple: it occasioned a very warm debate, which contained much personal invective, and repeated all the arguments for and against both parties: the resolution was carried in the affirmative.

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On the 14th of January Mr. Pitt, notwithstanding the majority in favour of opposition, introduced a bill for the better government and management of the affairs of the East India company. His scheme proposed the appointment of commissioners by

Mr. Pitt's East India bill.

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by his majesty, from the members of his privy council, who should be authorised and empowered from time to time to check, superintend, and control all acts, operations, and concerns, which related to the civil or military government, or revenues, of the territorial possessions. Two members of the said board should be the chancellor of the exchequer and the secretary for the home department; the board should have access to all the papers of the company; and the court of directors should deliver to the board copies of all the proceedings of both courts of directors and proprietors; copies of all dispatches received from the company's servants in India, and the instructions sent and proposed to be sent to India, relating to the civil or military government, or revenues of the British territorial possessions. The court of directors should pay due obedience to the orders of the board, respecting civil and military government and revenue; the board, in a limited time, were to return the copies which were received, with their approbation, or disapprobation, of the proceedings communicated; or proposing amendments if they found them unsatisfactory. The board was fully to state their reasons, and also their farther instructions, to be sent to India without delay. Should the directors conceive any of the orders of the board to be extra-official, in not relating to the civil, military, and financial government of India, to which the bill was limited, they should apply, by petition, to his majesty in council, concerning such injunctions; and the decision of the council thereon should be final and conclusive. The nomination of the commander in chief should be vested in his majesty, and that officer should always be second in council. The king should also have the power of removing any governor-general, president, and members of the councils of any British settlements in India; all vacancies in their offices should be supplied, subject

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to his majesty's disapprobation, that might be repeated until one was chosen whom he should approve. No order or resolution of any general court of proprietors should have power to revoke or rescind, or affect any proceeding of the court of directors, after his majesty's pleasure should have been signified upon the same. Such are the outlines of Mr. Pitt's scheme for the government of India. A great and leading difference between this project and the plan recently rejected by the lords is, that the former left the charter untouched, and the commercial concerns of this corporation of merchants under the sole management of the proprietors themselves and the directors of their choice. The company itself was so thoroughly convinced of their charter not being wantonly infringed, that they approved *, as proprietors and directors, both of its principle and regulations. By the former bill, the entire transfer of the company's affairs to commissioners nominated in parliament, and the permanent duration of their authority for a term of four years, had occasioned great alarm, as creating a new power dangerous to the constitution. The object of the present bill was merely control. In supporting his own proposition, Mr. Pitt expressed his high admiration of that part of Mr. Fox's scheme which respected the zemindars, but he disapproved general indiscriminate confiscation. He proposed, therefore, that an inquiry should be instituted for the purpose of restoring such as had been irregularly and unjustly deprived, and that they should be secured against violence in future. These last provisions were not included in the bill which he had prepared for the consideration of the house, but they formed a part of his general ideas for the reformation of India. Mr. Fox argued against this bill, as inadequate to the correction of the enormous abuses which pervaded the adminis-

* See proceedings of the courts of directors and proprietors, in January 1784

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tration of British Indostan. The bill, by continuing the powers of the court of directors, and rendering them dependent for their existence upon the proprietors, had no tendency to eradicate any mischief, or to obtain any valuable improvement; the connexion between both and their servants abroad, that had been the source of so many evils, would still continue. The governor-general was to have the same powers of internal regulation as before, and which had produced so great and manifold abuses. But this bill provided the remedy of recal; and of what value was this remedy? Did not all the officers of state, whether political or military, depend upon the governor-general? Would they not regard him therefore as one in whose official existence they were peculiarly interested? Would they not, if he should choose to be refractory, strengthen his principles of disobedience? The governor-general must be more than man to withstand so potent a temptation, surrounded and fortified by a variety of individuals in every department of life, who owed their existence to him; it was not the orders of a body of men, however respectable, that were in a great measure unconnected with the country wherein he resided, that could control his conduct. Mr. Pitt's scheme would throw a great mass of patronage into the hands of the crown. It tended (Mr. Fox said) not to remedy any of the evils which had subsisted for so long a time, or to put a period to those barbarities which had stigmatized and rendered infamous the character of Britain in the annals of India. If adopted, the company might, as in former instances, replenish their letters with moral precepts, but our eastern possessions would be irrecoverably lost to this country. To these objections it was replied, that Mr. Pitt's bill had all the efficiency necessary to correct abuses, prevent their recurrence, and improve our interest in India, without infringing the rights of private property,

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or creating a new power in the empire inconsistent with the established constitution. Acknowledging the defects of the present government of India, it was intended to lodge a principal share of the executive power where it ought to be vested. It shewed the utmost tenderness to the privileges of the company, and would produce that happy and desirable mixed government, which every friend to the immunities of a great commercial association, and every supporter of our free constitution, would cheerfully welcome. Though it attributed new powers to the monarchical branch of our polity, yet were they so circumscribed, that they could not, in the hands of the most abandoned prince, be converted into instruments of mischief and oppression; these arguments did not avail, and Mr. Pitt's bill was rejected by a majority of two hundred and twenty-two to two hundred and fourteen.

is rejected.

Meanwhile addresses were pouring in from all quarters to the sovereign, to testify the highest satisfaction at the dismission of the coalition ministry, and the appointment of the administration headed by Mr. Pitt. The coalition party, the more they heard the voice of the public, the more they laboured to retard an event which would be an appeal to the opinion and sentiments of their constituents. While Mr. Pitt's India bill was pending, Mr. Fox proposed to defer the second reading of the mutiny bill until the 23d of February, and thus procure a respite for a month; and the motion was adopted. It was immediately followed by another, which asserted, that the continuance of the present ministers in trusts of the highest importance and responsibility, was contrary to the principles of the constitution, and injurious to the interests of the king and his people. In support of this motion, the coalition leaders did not attempt to establish delinquency: the arguments proceeded from an assumed principle, that a minister

Addresses against the coalition party.

Question on dictation to the crown by the com-

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mons, in the choice of a minister.

a minister ought not to continue in office without the support of the house of commons: this was the basis of their reasoning, and unless it was firmly founded, all the superstructure must fall to the ground. If the position was true, its truth was to be ascertained either by positive law, or by general and admitted practice. By the constitution the king has the power, as chief executive magistrate, of choosing his own officers (unless under specific disqualifications, not imputed in the case in question) for performing the several branches of the executive duties. The house of commons has a right to impeach, on the ground of malversation in office, any of the ministers; but not to prescribe to the king in his choice of a minister. As the majority of the commons did not attempt to *prove* that they possessed a constitutional right of dictation to the crown respecting the choice of its officers, the weight of their arguments rested entirely on the *authority* of the superior numbers of commoners.

The king, lords, and the public are favourable to Mr. Pitt.

It may be proper to estimate the exact amount of this authority, in order to ascertain how far it was right or wrong, wise or unwise in government, to admit or reject it as a rule of conduct, when unsupported by law and precedent. Of the commons, two hundred and five against a hundred and eighty-four, voted that the minister ought not to continue in office, because he was not trusted by the house of commons. The house of lords, on the 4th of February, took this business into consideration; and the earl of Effingham moved two resolutions; the first referring to the proposition of the house of commons prescribing the restriction of the lords of the treasury from consenting to the acceptance of bills from India: secondly, to the vote of January the 16th, against the continuance of the present ministers in office. His lordship proposed, that the house should resolve, first, that an attempt in any one branch of the legislature to sus-

pend the execution of law, by separately assuming to itself the direction of a discretionary power, was unconstitutional: secondly, that by the known principles of this constitution, the undoubted authority of appointing to the great offices of executive government was solely vested in the king; and that that house had every reason to place the firmest reliance in his majesty's wisdom in the exercise of this prerogative. The lords in opposition endeavoured to justify the interference of the house of commons, on the ground of expediency, founded on particular circumstances of the case which the act of parliament could not foresee. It was, they said, intended to prevent the India company from contracting engagements for two millions sterling, to the prejudice of the public, their principal creditors. Lord Thurlow insisted that this was a peremptory order, which the house of commons had no right to issue in contravention of the law of the land. If he had been a lord of the treasury he would not have obeyed the resolution of the house of commons; and would have refused compliance on this plain principle, that nothing short of an act of parliament, formally passed by the three states of the realm, had the power of suspending any part of the statute or the common law of England. The chief subject of controversy was the second resolution. The supporters of Mr. Fox deprecated the dissension which the proposed interference must excite between the peers and commons; justified the commons on the ground of general expediency; and insisted that the house of commons, by the spirit of the constitution, had a right to control the choice of a minister. The ministerial lords, especially the chancellor, denied the existence of any such right, and challenged its assertors to establish it by proof. In this attempt their arguments not being satisfactory, a majority of a hundred to fifty-three of the peers voted for lord Effingham's resolutions and consequent address. The

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majority of the peers consisted of almost two to one in favour of the kingly prerogative of choosing his own servants. The majority of the commons, for rendering the exercise of that executive power dependent on the arbitrary will of one branch of the legislature, was only about ten to nine. The nation in general manifested its wishes in favour of the minister chosen by the crown. Thus, if the authority of opinion was to determine whether the present minister should or should not continue in office, (and the house of commons adduced no other argument), there was on the one hand the opinion of a small majority of the house of commons, on the other the opinion of a great majority of the house of peers, and evidently of by far the larger portion of the nation, and the choice of the king. While, however, there was a majority of the house of commons, that majority, be it ever so small, was the house, and no minister could retain his situation thwarted by the house. The king, ministry, and public, saw that the present majority in the house of commons did not represent the opinion, sentiments, and wishes of their constituents. It was resolved not to succumb to dictatorial mandates that could not be enforced: Mr. Pitt, on the 18th of February, informed the house that the king had not, in compliance with the resolution of the commons, dismissed his ministers, and that the ministers had not resigned. Mr. Fox, persisting in his assumed principle, contended that by retaining the ministers after the disapprobation of the house had been signified, the crown had degraded the representatives of the people to the lowest insignificance. Mr. Pitt insisted that there was no attempt to degrade the house of commons, or to infringe any of its rights; but merely an endeavour to prevent it from usurping the right of another branch of the legislature. It was apprehended that opposition, finding no other hopes of success, would refuse the supplies: but Mr. Fox,

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Fox, bold and adventurous as he was, appears to have been averse to a measure which would throw the country into such disorder.

Attempt of independent gentlemen to effect an accommodation between the ministerial and opposition parties.

WHILE the opposite parties were engaged in contentions so detrimental to public business, impartial men desired a coalition which should comprehend the chief talents of both sides, and produce a sacrifice of private competition to the public welfare: retain the abilities of Mr. Pitt and lord Thurlow in the councils of their country, and join with them the abilities of Mr. Fox and lord Loughborough; and disregarding either court predilections or whig confederacies, should chuse for the various offices men most qualified and disposed for discharging their respective duties. With this view, a considerable number of independent gentlemen met at the St. Alban's tavern on the 26th of January, and drew up an address recommending an union of parties. This being signed by fifty-three members of the house of commons, was presented by a committee to the duke of Portland and to Mr. Pitt. The duke of Portland answered he should be happy in obeying the commands of so respectable a meeting, but that the greatest difficulty to him was Mr. Pitt's continuance in office. Mr. Pitt expressed his readiness to pay attention to the commands of so respectable a meeting, and cooperate with their wishes to form a stronger and more extended administration, if the same could be done consistently with principle and honour. In the farther progress of the discussion, the duke of Portland proposed as a preliminary step, that Mr. Pitt should resign in compliance with the resolution of the house of commons. Mr. Pitt declared that it was inconsistent with his principles and sentiments to resign his ministerial capacity in the present circumstances. The duke of Portland proposed the same preliminary repeatedly in different forms; but Mr. Pitt still declared it inadmissible, and the duke

Meeting for that purpose.

Correspondence with the duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt.

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of Portland insisted on it as an indispensable step; the negociation therefore was suspended. Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt expressed their sentiments to the house: both appeared impressed with a sense of the benefits that might accrue from an united administration, but neither would relinquish their respective principles. Mr. Fox insisted, that it was unconstitutional in Mr. Pitt to hold his place after such a vote of the house of commons; that therefore he must resign. Mr. Pitt insisted, that it was not unconstitutional, and would not consent to resign: resignation would be the virtual admission of a control in the house of commons, which he denied them to possess. The reciprocal communications between the duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt had been hitherto carried on through the committee at the St. Alban's tavern. Still anxiously earnest to compass the desired union, these patriotic members proposed that his grace and the minister should have a conference; and that his majesty should send a message to the duke, desiring that he and Mr. Pitt should have an interview for the sake of forming a new administration. A message was accordingly sent to the duke of Portland, intimating his majesty's earnest desire that his grace should have a personal conference with Mr. Pitt for the purpose of forming a new administration on a wide basis, and on fair and equal terms. Before his grace would agree to the proposed meeting, he required an explanation of the term *equal*. Mr. Pitt replied that a personal conference would best explain specific objects; but the duke of Portland not being satisfied with this answer, refused to confer, and his refusal put an end to the negociation.

The design proves abortive.

THE address for the removal of ministry was presented to the king on the 25th of February. His majesty in reply declared it to be the object nearest his heart, that the public affairs should be conducted by a firm, efficient, united, and extended administration,

tration, entitled to the confidence of his people, and such as might have a tendency to put an end to the unhappy divisions and distractions of this country. He had employed very recent endeavours to unite in the public service, on a fair and equal footing, those whose joint efforts he thought the most fitted for producing so happy an effect: his endeavours had failed: he should be happy to embrace every measure most conducive to such an object, but could not perceive it would be forwarded by the dismission of his present ministers. His majesty observed, that no charge or complaint was suggested by the house against those officers of the crown, whose removal they solicited; that no specific objection was made to any one or more of his servants; that great numbers of his subjects had expressed their warmest satisfaction with the late changes made in his councils: in these circumstances, he trusted, his faithful commons would not wish the essential offices of the executive government to be vacated, until there was a prospect that the desired plan of union could be carried into effect. The commons repeated their address in a more detailed form, and with still more urgent solicitation for the removal of ministers. His majesty's reply contained opinions and sentiments of the same important tendency as his former; and in the same temperate, firm, and dignified spirit, repeated the cogent and unanswerable argument; "You require the removal of my ministers, without alleging any charge of delinquency." Finding every attempt unavailing to induce the sovereign to sacrifice his choice of servants highly approved of by his people, to the mere will of the coalition party, unsupported by any constitutional reasoning, Mr. Fox proposed what he termed a representation, but really was a remonstrance to the sovereign; stating the privileges and power of the house, and the ancient practice of withholding supplies until griev-

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ances were redressed; and explaining the evils that would accrue to the country if they exercised this right; that necessity only could justify its exertion; that such a necessity, arising from his majesty's advisers, did exist; and that the measures originating with these advisers, were altogether contrary to the principles and maxims by which the illustrious house of Hanover had reigned over this free country, in such harmony with the people, such prosperity and glory: for whatever consequences might result from the necessity imposed on the house of commons to assert its own rights, the advisers of the crown were responsible. The commination intimated, in this statement being carried only by a majority of one, opposition did not think it advisable to contend for the refusal of the supplies. Their superiority had been gradually decreasing, and they saw that if they attempted so strong a measure, they would be out-voted, and that the house of commons would at last concur with the majority of the nation. They became more and more sensible of their great and increasing unpopularity; and from this time, on the 9th of March, they appeared to have considered themselves as conquered. The opposition leaders had proposed, as a preventive of a dissolution, to move a short mutiny bill; but this design they now relinquished, and suffered the act to pass for the usual term; and all parties prepared for a speedy dissolution of parliament.

Display of Mr. Pitt's talents and character in resisting such a confederacy of genius and power.

THUS terminated a contest between a powerful confederacy in the house of commons, and the executive government, supported by the confidence which the nation reposed in the talents and character of the principal minister. The coalition party defended the ground which it had assumed, and attacked administration with a force, impetuosity, concert, and perseverance, which must have overborne any minister, who did not unite abilities to see the means of defending a constitutional tenure, skill

skill to apply them, and firmness to persist in maintaining what he conceived to be right against any combination of adversaries. A minister less powerful in reasoning, would have yielded to allegations so confidently urged, to sophistry so plausibly supported, or even to the very authority of such illustrious names. A minister, however endowed with intellectual superiority, unless also resolutely firm, would have rather conceded what he knew to be right, than maintained a contest with so numerous, forcible, and well-disciplined a host, though he knew them to be wrong. Without a third advantage, a high degree of estimation with the public, success might have been uncertain. On the side of Mr. Fox there were consummate ability, intrepid boldness, fortified by a special confederacy. On the side of Mr. Pitt, there was consummate ability and firmness, and unquestioned character, which was fortified by no special combination, but increased, extended, and enlarged that general connexion which wisdom, virtue, and appropriate fame rarely fail to attach to a senator or statesman among an informed, distinguishing, and free people. Mr. Fox, though transcendent in genius, sought power by means which, during the two preceding reigns, had exalted several ministers of no genius. Mr. Pitt secured public confidence, and acquired power, by personal qualities. But every impartial well-wisher to his country, while he rejoices that Britain acquired the executorial services of a Pitt, must no less regret that she lost the executorial services of a Fox.

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Public estimation of the contending leaders.

While the chief attention of parliament had been occupied by these momentous subjects, several matters of subordinate importance were transacted. The receipt-tax, meritorious as a financial measure, and productive without being burdensome, was, notwithstanding, very unpopular; and a motion was made for its repeal. Several substitutes were proposed;

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proposed; and among the rest, sir Cecil Wray moved a tax on *maid servants*, which produced laughable strictures rather than any serious consideration. The receipt-tax was continued, and new penalties were annexed to enforce the imposts. A committee was appointed for inquiring into illicit practices to defraud the revenue; and Christopher Atkinson, esq. having been convicted of perjury, was expelled the house of commons. Previous to the dissolution of parliament, his majesty judged it expedient, in the particular circumstances of the case, to announce his intention of recurring to the sense of the people, and the reasons in which that intention was founded. His speech, as compressing the sentiments, opinions, objects, and motives of our sovereign, respecting the momentous subjects of the narrative just finished, is highly deserving of full citation: it was to the following effect: "My lords and gentlemen, on a full consideration of the present situation of affairs, and of the extraordinary circumstances which have produced it, I am induced to put an end to this session of parliament. I feel it a duty which I owe to the constitution and to the country, in such a situation, to recur as speedily as possible to the sense of my people, by calling a new parliament. I trust that this means will tend to obviate the mischiefs arising from the unhappy divisions and distractions which have lately subsisted; and that the various important objects which will require consideration, may be afterwards proceeded upon with less interruption, and with happier effect. I can have no other object, but to preserve the true principles of our free and happy constitution, and to employ the powers entrusted to me by law for the only end for which they were given, to the good of my people."

The king declares his intention of taking the sense of his people.

Dissolution

On the 24th of March, parliament was prorogued, and the next evening it was dissolved by proclamation.

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and character of this parliament.

THUS ended, in its fourth year, a parliament, than which few assemblies either witnessed more changes in the executive administration, or exhibited a greater change of political character. The members had been elected at a season, when the recent disturbances of 1780 repressed the spirit of opposition to government, from the apprehension, that if suffered to prevail, it might generate a discontent, eventually productive of similar outrages; and at a time when the sanguine hopes from unusual success obliterated former miscarriages. Disappointed expectation soon revived dissatisfaction, and the parliament which had been most devoted to lord North, became eager and active to drive him from his ministerial situation. The administration of lord North had been followed by the appointment of a set of men, from whom many of their countrymen expected the nation would derive signal benefit; but these hopes were overturned almost as soon as they were raised: the untimely death of lord Rockingham, and the unhappy misunderstandings that succeeded, speedily demolished the fabric. The administration of lord Shelburne passed almost entirely during the recess of parliament. It fell unfortunately to his lot to negociate the terms of the general peace, which was signed at Versailles on the 20th of January 1783. Upon the assembling of parliament, this measure was the first object of their deliberations, and was judged to deserve a strong and severe censure. Those who had been most hostile at the commencement of parliament, now became most closely united. The professed friends of prerogative, and professed champions of the people, formed a coalition, which in the third session of parliament established the fourth ministry. An imputed pursuit of perpetual dominion, in eight months, drove this party from power; and an early period of the fourth session saw a fifth ministry. Half of the fourth year was not

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not passed when this body was dissolved. Having begun with the most obsequious assent to every requisition of ministers, it ended with questioning the most necessary prerogatives of the crown. Its character being stamped by its successive leaders, for two sessions it exhibited the dextrous but temporary expedients, the indecisive policy and indulgent profusion of lord North. In its third year, before the two parties were fully cemented and ability assumed its native superiority, it displayed a mixture of temporising and decisive politics. In its fourth year, the supremacy of Mr. Fox being now established, its measures bore the stamp of the energy, promptness, decision, and adventurous boldness of that eminent statesman.

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General election.—Meeting of parliament—and commencement of Mr. Pitt's administration.—The King's speech.—State of the empire when Mr. Pitt's ministry commenced.—Objects which he proposes to pursue.—First efforts directed to finance.—Bill for the prevention of smuggling.—Commutation act.—Arguments against and for it.—Regulation on duties for British spirits.—Preliminary motions for the relief of the East India company.—Bill for the regulation of India.—Arguments against it.—Arguments for it.—Comparison of the two bills as resulting from the characters of their authors.—Debate on the Westminster election.—Mr. Dundas proposes the restoration of the forfeited estates.—A law passed for that purpose.—Labours of Mr. Pitt in investigating the public accounts.—Supplies.—Loan and taxes.—Session closes.

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General election.

BY dissolving the parliament, his majesty virtually asked the question, Did your late representatives speak your sense, or not? If they did, you will re-elect them; if not, you will chuse others. Thus interrogated, the greater part of the people answered, No; and a very considerable majority of members friendly to Mr. Pitt was returned. As far as popular opinion can be a test of either merit or demerit, it was decidedly favourable to the minister, and inimical to his opponents. The general conduct of Mr. Fox often has been erroneously estimated by those who considered defects, without comprehending the excellencies of his plans, acts, and character; but never was he less popular than after his India bill and contest with the sovereign. Still, however, he retained great favour in some parts of the kingdom, especially in Westminster, and his election was the most noted of any that occurred for the new parliament. The candidates were, lord Hood, who had

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Contest for Westminster, and influence of a beautiful lady.

so eminently distinguished himself with Rodney, Mr. Fox, and sir Cecil Wray; of whom the two last were the late members. Wray had been originally chosen through the interest of Mr. Fox, but now abandoned that gentleman and joined lord Hood. For several days, Mr. Fox was superior to either of his competitors; but his majority afterwards rapidly decreased, and he became inferior to sir Cecil Wray, who was far surpassed by the naval candidate. On the 11th day of the poll he was three hundred and eighteen behind Wray; but an interference now took place that changed the face of affairs. A lady of very high rank, still more eminent for beauty than for condition, one of our lovely countrywomen, who demonstrate that, in celebrating a Venus or a Helen, poets do not exceed nature and experience, warmly interested herself in the election of Mr. Fox, with a success far beyond the hopes of the favoured candidate. Animated by personal friendship, and inspired with an ardent zeal for what she conceived to be a public benefit, this exalted woman undertook a personal canvass in favour of the losing candidate, and was not to be deterred by any inconveniencies of the pursuit, or by the strictures of the opposite party upon active efforts which were so efficacious towards the attainment of the object. Many voters indeed, though far from approving of Mr. Fox's political principles and conduct, could not withstand the fascinating eloquence of so impressive an advocate; they might have resisted the utmost efforts of the brilliant genius of an Erskine or a Sheridan, but could not withstand the brilliant eyes of the duchess: these two great masters of the pathetic might have in vain attempted to canvass for their brother orator; persuasion sat on the lips and dimpled in the smiles of the beautiful Devonshire, pleading for her brother whig. Persons too callous to yield to the application of beauty,

beauty, were not without other avenues to their hearts, to which the fair friend of Mr. Fox did not fail to apply with effect. The candidate himself, extremely well qualified for co-operating with the efforts of his friends, was better known to the lower and more numerous classes of Westminster electors, than any other eminent person existing. He was naturally open, frank, unassuming, and popular in his manners, politically attended all the public meetings, and associated under the appearance of most intimate familiarity with tavern-keepers, mechanics, and tradesmen, and was, by a great number belonging to these classes, regarded with the warmest affection. He was, besides, connected with many of the principal inhabitants, whose personal exertions and influence were strenuously employed in his favour. After a contest of forty days, Mr. Fox was two hundred and thirty-five superior; but a scrutiny being demanded by sir Cecil Wray, and granted by the high bailiff, a return was not made. The orator, however, having been chosen by Scottish boroughs, had a voice in parliament.[p]

Meeting of parliament, and commencement of Mr. Pitt's efficient administration.

THE 16th of May was the day fixed for the meeting of the new parliament, in which Mr. Pitt, not twenty-five years of age, may be properly said to have commenced the chief executorial direction of British affairs. The probable conduct of a man

[p] The writer was one day present at this celebrated election, and being recently come to London, was forcibly struck with the free and easy terms in which some of the lower adherents of Mr. Fox, especially a party of butchers, accosted a personage of his transcendent superiority. It was not with the veneration due to so extraordinary talents from any rank, that those persons of the very humblest addressed Charles James Fox: it was in the endearing terms of fond comrades, on a footing of perfect equality: "Charles, my sweet boy; God bless your black face! do not be afraid, my lad, WE *are your friends!*" The writer recollects, the same day, to have heard a very open avowal of corruption. Being in a bookseller's shop in Covent Garden, a woman, who it seems was a neighbour, coming in, was asked by the master of the house, If her husband had polled? No, she answered; we are told, votes will bear a higher price next week! The circumstances of this election, in a city wherein votes are so general, and of another in the same place four years after, are by no means favourable to the doctrine of certain political reformists, that universal suffrage would promote respectability and independence of elections.

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in an office depends upon his talents, dispositions, and habits, combined with the state of affairs relative to his employment, and his own clear and full comprehension of its nature, objects, means, and duties. If a minister takes an exact and complete survey of the actual condition of a nation, and rises to general views of the chief constituents of national prosperity, bestowing application and perseverance either in the removal of evil or promotion of good, he must produce much greater benefit to the state, than he who regards and pursues only a part.

THE chief constituents of national prosperity are, first, the means of subsistence, through agriculture, mines, fisheries, manufactures, and commerce: secondly, defence in military and naval strength, for securing those advantages; comprehending also, connexions with foreign countries, when conducive either to benefit or security: thirdly, the preservation and improvement of that physical and moral character, which is best fitted for retaining and promoting the advantages; this head requires the encouragement of useful and liberal arts, and in every civilized and enlightened country the promotion of science and literature: fourthly, the gratification of prevalent habits of comfort and enjoyments, as far as depends upon government, unless restriction be necessary for the public good, and the liberty of the subject, without which, to generous and independent spirits, no other blessing of life can afford perfect enjoyment: fifthly, subsidiary to the rest, is provision for the continuance of these, as far as human foresight can extend.[q] A statesman of consummate wisdom may bestow a greater or less proportion of attention on one

[q] This analysis the reader will perceive to be abridged from Gillies's Frederic, which appears to the author to exhibit a much juster and more comprehensive estimate of national advantage, than those, either of writers or counsellors, who should consider mere opulence, either private or public, or the aggregate of both, as the tests of national prosperity.

or another of these constituents, according to circumstances; but such a minister will have them all in his view. The peculiar situation of Britain, exhausted by the enormous expences of her late ruinous war, and loaded with an immense public debt, rendered the promotion of trade and improvement of finance the most immediately urgent objects of legislative and ministerial consideration. Besides, at this time, the study of political economy occupied the greater number of scholars, moral and political philosophers, and almost every able and informed senator and statesman. Such disquisitions, originating in French ingenuity, had been corrected, enlarged, and digested into a grand system, by British experience, knowledge, and deduction. Adam Smith was the framer of commercial science and the consequent inculcations; and his estimable work, indeed, was become the text book of political economists in the closet, the cabinet, and senate. A very eminent writer often gives a tone and fashion to the subjects which he treats, that procures them an attention, perhaps greater than may be justified by their comparative value among the various pursuits of life and constituents of happiness. Dwelling on the nature and causes of the wealth of nations, both theorists and politicians, by too exclusive attention to that one subject, have frequently been led into an imagination that the supreme constituent of national good was opulence; an idea totally inconsistent with a knowledge of human powers and enjoyments, the experience of happiness, and the history of nations.[r] This very high estimation of wealth, as the supreme excellence of a country, co-operated with the mercantile character, so prevalent in

[r] Compare, for instance, the Greeks and Persians, the Romans and Carthaginians, the Europeans and Hindoos. The heroes sent by poverty from the north, to the dastardly and enervated defenders of the riches of the south. These, in the monuments of Gillies, of Fergusson, and Gibbon, shew how falsely a political reasoner would conclude, who should measure national glory and happiness by national receipts.

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Britain, and many in the various departments of active (especially trading) life considered commerce and finance as the principal objects of executorial conduct. Mr. Pitt, though too enlarged in his views to admit that opinion in the common extent, yet regarding trade, and especially revenue, as most immediately urgent in forming his plans for the first session of the new parliament, directed his mind chiefly to commerce and finance, and these constitute the principal subjects of his majesty's introductory speech to parliament.

The king's speech.

THE new parliament being met, Mr. Cornwall was chosen speaker, and on the 19th, his majesty opened the session by a speech from the throne; he declared the high satisfaction with which he met his parliament, after having recurred in so important a moment to the sense of his people. He entertained a just and confident reliance, that the assembly was animated with the sentiments of loyalty and attachment to the constitution, which had been so fully manifested in every part of the kingdom. The objects particularly recommended to their attention, were the alarming progress of frauds in the revenue, the framing of such commercial regulations as were immediately necessary, and the providing for the good government of our possessions in the East Indies. Upon this subject, parliament would not lose sight of the effect which the measures they adopted might have on our own constitution, and our dearest interests at home. He had no wish, but to consult the prosperity of his people, by a constant attention to every object of national concern, by an uniform adherence to the true principles of our free constitution, and by supporting and maintaining in their just balance the rights and privileges of every branch of the legislature. An address conformable to the speech having been moved, a debate arose on the expressions of gratitude to the king, for having dissolved the

the late parliament: and an amendment was proposed to leave out such parts of the address as referred to that subject, which was negatived by a great majority. As his majesty's speech implied a censure of the former parliament, and particularly of Mr. Fox's East India bill, Mr. Burke undertook the justification of opposition and the censure of their adversaries, and on the 14th of June made a motion for an address to the king, representing and vindicating the proceedings of the last parliament, and criminating the present ministers. The remonstrance[1] dwelt particularly on the rectitude and expedience of the late East India bill, and on the dreadful consequences likely to ensue from the dissolution. Though both the speech and proposed statement were replete with ingenuity, yet the main arguments being necessarily a repetition of what had been frequently urged before, the motion was negatived without a division. Firmly established as the minister, supported by the people through their recently appointed representatives, as well as chosen by the king, Mr. Pitt was called to exercise his talents for performing the duties of so arduous a situation. Although a year and a half had now elapsed since the conclusion of peace, the contentions of party had hitherto prevented the adoption of any effectual measures to recover the country from the miserable state to which it had been reduced by an expensive and ruinous war. Commerce was still stagnant, the national credit depressed, and the funds, after an interval of peace, at the lowest price of war; the public income, unequal to the expenditure even in its full amount,

[1] He said, he intended his motion as an epitaph on his departed friend, the last parliament; that he had, on some occasions, written long epitaphs to the memory of those that he honoured and respected; and, on the present occasion, he chose to follow the corpse to the sepulchre, and go through the ceremony of saying, "ashes to ashes, and dust to dust," in sure and certain hope, through the merit of the good works of the last parliament, that it would have a glorious and joyful resurrection, and become immortal.

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State of the empire when Mr. Pitt's ministry began.

was at present greatly diminished by fraud; and our important concerns in India without any effectual plan of beneficial arrangement; the country, so situated, required the efforts of the minister to raise drooping credit; to revive the funds; to promote the just and beneficial government of India; to improve the income, by suppressing fraudulent deduction, and by positive additions; to stimulate the national industry, enterprise, and skill, to the highest improvement of our mercantile capability; and to promote manufactures and commerce, the sources of public and private wealth. Such were the objects to which, partly the circumstances of the country, and partly the prevalent opinion of the times, called the attention of Mr. Pitt, who was just commencing an administration long and important; in which the counsels and conduct of the minister, whether wise or unwise, right or wrong, stamp the history of these realms, their dependencies and connexions, for the last sixteen years of the eighteenth century; an æra more awfully momentous, involving greater and more extensive interests of enlightened, energetic, and efficacious MAN, than any century in the annals of human nature.

Objects which he proposes to pursue.

His first efforts are directed to finance.

THE first ministerial efforts of Mr. Pitt were directed to finance. Before he proceeded to new imposts, or new regulations for the advancement of revenue, he attempted to render the present taxes as productive as possible, by preventing the defalcations of fraud. He had bestowed very great pains in collecting information respecting the various subjects, modes, and details of smuggling. The former ministers having also in view the suppression of this unlawful traffic, had in the last session proposed a committee for inquiring into those illicit practices; three reports were delivered, containing very ample materials; and Mr. Eden, chairman of the committee, having employed his usual industry and acuteness in investigating these minute and complicated

cated topics, had moved the following resolution, declaratory of the result, That the illicit practice had greatly increased; the public revenue was annually defrauded to the extent of not less than two millions; and these enormities and national losses merited the early and serious attention of the legislature. Soon after the meeting of the new parliament, the subjects of these reports, and of the laws in being for the prevention of smuggling, were referred to a committee of the whole house. On the second of June, the chancellor of the exchequer moved for leave to bring in a bill for the more effectual prevention of smuggling. The objects of the proposition were, to extend the bounds of the hovering laws, which had limited the distance from shore within which seizures could be made; to prevent ships from carrying arms, without a licence from the admiralty; smuggling ships once captured were never to be returned; ships of a certain description, adapted to smuggling, were never to be built; and clearances were to be regulated, so as to prevent ships clearing out in ballast, and afterwards going on the smuggling trade. In the progress of the bill a variety of improvements were suggested; and, after considerable discussion, it passed into a law.

Bill for the prevention of smuggling.

AMONG various articles of illicit trade, the principal commodity was tea. It had appeared before the committee on smuggling, that only five millions five hundred thousand pounds of tea were sold annually by the East India company, whereas the annual consumption of the kingdom was believed to exceed twelve millions; so that the contraband traffic in this article was more than the legal. The remedy which the minister devised for this evil, was to lower the duties on tea to so small an amount, as to make the profit inadequate to the risk. In this trade, the rate of freight and insurances to the shore was about 25 per cent., and the insurance

Commutation act.

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on the inland carriage about 10 per cent. more; in all 35 per cent. The duty on tea, as it then stood, was about 50 per cent.; so that the smuggler had an advantage over the fair dealer of 15 per cent. As this regulation would cause a deficiency in the revenue of about 600,000*l.* *per annum*, he proposed to make good the same by an additional window tax. This tax (he said) would not be felt as an additional burden, but ought to be considered as a *commutation*, and would prove favourable to the subject.[t] But the principal benefit which he expected from this measure, was the absolute ruin of the smuggling trade, which subsisted almost entirely on the profit of their teas. Another benefit would be, the timely and necessary relief it would afford to the East India company. By this regulation they would find a vent for thirteen, instead of five, millions of pounds of tea, and would be enabled to employ twenty more large ships in their service. This was the bill since so well known under the title of the COMMUTATION ACT.

Arguments against and for it.

OPPOSITION in both houses denied this tax to be commutative: tea, though a commodity of general use, still was an article of luxury; whereas the admission of light into houses was indispensably necessary; and thus all persons, whether they drank tea or not, were compelled to pay a tax. The gain to the company might be considerable, but must be derived from the people, without any return; the present was a new and positive tax, and not a substitution of one for another. This bill was farther censured, as a measure of finance; tea, it was said, was a most eligible object for taxation, which produced to the revenue near a million sterling annually. If once given up, it could never be recovered,

[t] A house (he said), for instance, of nine windows, which would be rated at 10*s.* 6*d.*, might be supposed to consume seven pounds of tea; the difference between the old duties on which, and the new duty proposed, might at an average amount to 1*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.*; so that such a family would gain by the commutation 15*s.* 4*d.*

and

and five times the quantity of tea consumed yearly that had formerly been used, by the new duty would not produce an equal revenue. It was farther contended, that it would not affect the suppression of illicit traffic; the price of tea on the continent was 7½ per cent. cheaper than at the company's sales, and 5 per cent. was allowed to the company: these added to the 12½ per cent. duty, it was asserted, would be a sufficient compensation for all the risks incurred by the smuggler. Mr. Pitt combated these objections: he denied that tea was a certain and permanent object of revenue; the present state of finance and public credit did not permit him to barter a certainty for an uncertainty: he was obliged to select an object on which he could build the most entire and confident expectation; and with the invaluable benefits that would result from this measure to the public, notwithstanding the industry with which popular odium was attempted to be stirred up against it, he was ready to risk any unpopularity which it might occasion. The bill was passed by a majority of one hundred and forty-eight to forty.

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A THIRD bill was also passed into a law for the regulation of duties upon British spirits, and to discontinue during a limited time certain imposts upon rum and spirits imported from the West Indies. These three bills comprehended the whole plan of Mr. Pitt upon the subject of smuggling, as far as it was now submitted to parliament. The effect of the scheme for preventing contraband trade, including several improvements which subsequent experience devised, has been almost the annihilation of that species of fraud, to the great benefit of the revenue [u] and of morals. The commutation act being misin-

Regulation of duties on British spirits.

[u] Visitors of the watering-places, or other parts of the coast, who have conversed with elderly or middle-aged watermen, or any kind of sea-faring men in those places, must have perceived that they considered smuggling, heretofore their most lucrative occupation, as having received its death-blow from the hands of Mr. Pitt.

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terpreted and misrepresented both by ignorance and sophistical ingenuity, caused at first some dissatisfaction; that, however, was not of long continuance, and the additional duty on windows came to be paid without reluctance.

Preliminary motions for the relief of the East India company.

MEANWHILE East India affairs occupied the attention of the minister and parliament; a committee was appointed to collect information; and its report being presented, was taken into consideration by a committee of the whole house. A bill was proposed, for enabling the company to make a half-yearly dividend at the rate of eight per cent. for the year, and passed both houses, with considerable opposition in the house of lords, in which it was said that the company's affairs could not afford such a dividend.[x] On the second of July, Mr. Pitt introduced a bill for the relief of the company: this proposition was to allow the company a further respite of duties due to the exchequer, to enable them to accept bills beyond the amount prescribed by former acts of parliament, and to establish their future dividends. The proposed indulgence was, that the duties now due should be paid by instalments, at Midsummer and Christmas 1785. The principle of the projected accommodation, was the solvency of the company at the specified terms. Mr. Pitt, in supporting the measure, informed the house, that from the late inquiries which he had made into the state of the company's finances, and from the very ample and satisfactory accounts he had obtained, he had no room to admit the remotest idea that they would not, at the period he had mentioned, be able to fulfil every engagement. India would now enjoy peace, and parliament would enforce the active economy which the present state of affairs so strongly recommended; a few years of tranquillity, and a system of exertion and frugality,

[x] Parliamentary Journals.

would

would render our Indian possessions affluent and prosperous. Opposition doubted the favourable prospect of the company's affairs, and objected to the relief proposed. A question was started, Whether or not parliament, by authorising acceptances of bills, guaranteed their validity? Mr. Pitt contended that they did not; Mr. Fox that they did, at least so far as to pledge the national honour to their responsibility, by allowing the acceptance which they had a right to restrain. The sanction of parliament impressed the public with an opinion of their goodness, and established their credit. Mr. Dundas illustrated the subject, by reminding the house of the circumstances in which the restriction had originated. By the regulating bill of 1773, the public were to come in for a share in the profits of the company: in order, therefore, to prevent the appropriation of any part of their profits to the payment of bills that might be fraudulently sent over from India, it had been thought necessary to restrain the amount of those bills; consequently, when a parliament should consent to the acceptance of bills to a greater amount, it resigned, in behalf of the public, so much of the national claim to the dividends, as was secured to them by the bill of 1773. The bill passed without a division.

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THESE measures were preparatory and subordinate to the bill of the minister for the government of India, which he now introduced, similar in object and principle to the scheme that he had proposed in January, but more detailed in its provisions, and more extensive in its applications. On the 6th of July, Mr. Pitt proposed his bill for the better regulation of India: in his prefatory oration he stated the magnitude of the subject; and described the vast accession of power which the wealth of India had for a series of years added to the empire of Great Britain: our former opulence was owing to the prudent management of our commercial concerns;

Bill for the regulation of India.

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concerns; and our future hopes depended on the judicious regulations that were now to be introduced for the government of that country. The leading object was to correct and restrain abuses, remedy evils, improve the condition of British India, and thereby augment the opulence and prosperity of this country, by powers adequate to those important purposes, without being so great as to endanger the balance of the constitution. The bill undertook to institute a new system of government at home, and to regulate the different presidencies abroad; to provide for the happiness of the natives, and to put an end to their misunderstandings and controversies; to establish a new judicature for trying offences committed in India, and by strictness of government to prevent delinquency. The proposed change at home was nearly the same that has appeared in the narrative.[y] It proposed to leave the management of commercial affairs to the company, and to vest the territorial possessions in a board of control. Abroad, the supreme council and governor-general were to have an absolute power of originating orders to the inferior presidencies, in cases that did not interfere with the directions already received from Britain, and of suspending members of the other councils in case of disobedience. The supreme government was restrained from offensive war or alliances, without orders from home; the subordinate settlements were prohibited from forming even defensive treaties, but with a conditional clause, which would render their permanency dependent on the ratification of the governor-general; the servants of the company were required to transmit accounts of all considerable transactions to the council of Bengal, and the supreme council to convey speedy intelligence to Britain of every important occurrence. In considering the comfort

[y] See this volume, chap. 31.

and

and security of the natives, inquiry was ordered to be instituted by the different presidencies into the expulsions of hereditary farmers, and the oppressive rents and contributions that might have been extorted; and measures were directed to be employed for their relief and future tranquillity. Various regulations were added, respecting the debts of the nabob of Arcot, and the rajah of Tanjore, to private individuals and to the company. The bill further required an examination into the different establishments of the presidencies, for the purposes of retrenchment, and an annual report of the same to be transmitted to Britain. The proposition also contained both the description of delinquency, and the judicial establishments for its cognizance and punishments. Crimes committed by English subjects in any part of India, were made amenable to every British court of justice, in the same manner as if they had been committed in our immediate dominions. Presents, except such as were merely ceremonial, were forbidden to be received, unless by a counsellor at law, a physician, a surgeon, or a chaplain, under the penalty of confiscation of the present, and an additional fine, at the discretion of the court. Disobedience of orders, unless absolutely necessary, and pecuniary transactions, contrary to the interests of the company, were declared to be high crimes and misdemeanors. The company were forbidden to interfere in favour of any person legally condemned of the above crimes, or to employ him in their service for ever. The governors of the several presidencies were empowered to imprison any person suspected of illicit correspondence, and to send him to England if they judged it necessary. Every person serving in India was required, within two months after his return to England, to deliver in upon oath to the court of exchequer, an inventory of his real and personal estates, and a copy thereof to the court of directors, for the inspection

of

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of the proprietors; and should the validity of the account be doubted, on any complaint to that effect made by the board of control, the court of directors, or three proprietors possessing India stock to the amount of 10,000*l.* conjunctively, the court of exchequer were required to examine upon oath the person accused, and to imprison him until he should have satisfactorily answered interrogatories. Neglect or concealment were to be punished by the imprisonment of the defendant, the forfeiture of all his estates, both real and personal, and an incapacity of ever serving the company. For the more speedy and effectual prosecution of persons in Great Britain, charged with crimes committed in India; a court was established, to consist of three judges, nominated respectively by the chancery, king's bench, and common pleas, four peers taken from a list of twenty-six, and six commoners from a list of forty (the lists to be chosen by ballot from their respective houses), a certain number of whom should be subject to peremptory challenge both by the prosecutor and the defendant. The judgment of the court was to extend to imprisonment, fine, and incapacity of serving the company. Such are the outlines of Mr. Pitt's legislative, executorial, and judicial arrangement for the government of India.

Arguments against the bill.

OPPOSITION reprobated the bill, on the grounds of insufficiency for the regulation of India, and dangerously extending the patronage of the crown. Many objections were also made to particular clauses; the new tribunal was said to be in truth a screen for delinquents, since no man was to be tried but on the accusation of the company or the attorney-general; he had only to conciliate government, in order to attain perfect security. The obligation to swear to the amount of property, and the powers granted to the courts of enforcing interrogatories, tended to compel persons to criminate themselves,

themselves, and were modes of inquisitorial proceedings unknown to the subjects of this island. It was confidently denied that there was any necessity for so alarming a departure from the established principles and practice of the constitution; and it was therefore presumed that it could have been done with no other than a corrupt view, to draw the rich and powerful servants of the East India company into a dependance upon the crown for its protection. Mr. Fox directed the force of his eloquence against this measure of his rival. "It prepares (said the orator) feebleness at home by a division of power; if there be a receipt, a nostrum, for making a weak government, it is by giving the power of contriving measures to one, and the nomination of the persons who are to execute them to another. Theories that do not connect men with measures, are not theories for this world; they are chimeras with which a recluse may divert his fancy, but not principles on which a statesman would found his system. But, say the ministers, the negative provides against the appointment of improper officers; the commissioners have a negative, therefore they have full power. Here then is the complete annihilation of the company, and of the so much vaunted chartered rights. The bill is a scheme of dark and delusive art, and takes away the claims of the company by slow and gradual sap. The first assumption made by the minister, is the power of superintendance and control; and what is the meaning of this power? Does it mean such a superintendance and control as this house possesses over ministers? No; for this house has not the power of giving official instructions. It is to be an active control, it is to originate measures; and this is the next step. At last, to complete the invasion, orders may be secretly conveyed to India by the commissioners, at the very moment they were giving their open countenance to instructions to be sent from

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from the directors of an opposite tendency. To suffer such a scheme of dark intrigue will be a farce, a child's play, and does not deserve the name of a government. To this progressive and underhand scheme, I peremptorily object. If it were right to vest the powers of the court of directors in a board of privy counsellors, at any rate it should be done openly. A great nation ought never to descend to gradual and insidious encroachment. Let them do what they wished for explicitly, and shew the company, that what they dare to do, they dare to justify."

Arguments for it.

THE minister declared his conviction, that the ordinary courts of justice were inadequate to the cognizance of Indian delinquency; and that there were many crimes committed there, for which the common law had provided no redress: at the same time he did not conceive, that the principle on which he proceeded was so totally unknown in the jurisprudence of this kingdom; it was recognised in the whole code of martial law. As to the influence of the crown, he trusted he had sufficiently guarded against any such apprehensions, by the mode directed for the constitution of the new court of judicature. The whole plan was efficient to every good purpose, and guarded against the evil which must have resulted from the scheme of Mr. Fox. The bill passed both houses by very great majorities.

IN the characters of Messrs. Pitt and Fox a diversity has been remarked, which may perhaps account for a striking difference in their respective systems. Energetic as Mr. Fox is in power, he is not always proportionably guarded and considerate in the exertions of his faculties; hence, though his judgment be exquisite, his actually exerted discrimination does not uniformly keep pace with the strength of his invention: Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, powerful as he is in force, is extremely circumspect and discriminate, as to the extent and bounds of opera-

1784.

tion most conducive to the purpose. Mr. Fox, adopting a principle in itself right, often adopts it too implicitly, and carries its application to a greater extent than the exact case justifies. Mr. Pitt much more accurately fixes the line of demarcation, which the principle with the existing case requires. The India bill of 1783, considered in relation to certain ends, was ably, skilfully, and effectually devised; but attending to efficacy, its author neglected control. The wheels strongly constructed, but wanting the drag; by the force and rapidity of their motion, might have overturned and crushed the constitution. The plan of 1784, in forming a power for specific use, guarded more cautiously against eventual abuse.

Comparison of the two bills as resulting from the characters of their authors.

DURING this session, the Westminster election occupied considerable attention; a scrutiny having been granted by the high bailiff, at the instance of sir Cecil Wray, the unsuccessful candidate, its legality was questioned by Mr. Fox: according to that gentleman, the election ought to have been referred to a committee, under Mr. George Grenville's bill. The discussion produced an astonishing display of legal ability and knowledge, both from Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox; when the question was put, the arguments of the former were found to have prevailed, and the scrutiny was ordered to be continued.

Debate on the Westminster election.

A VERY humane and equitable measure was this session proposed by Mr. Dundas, indeed equally meritorious as a scheme of individual justice and national policy: this was the restoration of the estates forfeited in the Scottish rebellions to the representatives of the sufferers. He enlarged on the wisdom and justice of the principle, and adducing the opinion of a Chatham as an authority in favour of his arguments, he quoted the celebrated passage in one of that illustrious orator's speeches, which describes the merits of the Scotch highlanders.

Mr. Dundas proposes the restoration of the forfeited estates.

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highlanders. He drew an auspicious omen from reflecting, that the first blow had been given the proscription by the earl of Chatham; and trusted, that the remains of a system, which, whether dictated at first by narrow views or by sound policy, ought certainly to be temporary, would be completely annihilated under the administration of his son.

He made the panegyric of persons under this predicament, who had distinguished themselves in the last war. He said there was not one of those families, in which some person had not atoned for the errors of his ancestors, and spilt his blood in his country's cause; and he would boldly assert, that the spirit which had rendered the inhabitants of the highlands disaffected to the present government, had long since disappeared, and that the king had not at this moment a set of more loyal subjects in his dominions. It would be magnanimity to treat them like true and faithful subjects, and cancel for ever the offences of their ancestors; nor would the liberality of the proceeding be greater than its policy. The spirit of emigration in the highlanders was such, that nothing could extinguish it but the return of their long lost patrons, and the affection and reverence which the inhabitants of that part of the island felt for their natural lords. It was obvious, that a property held for the benefit of the public, was not so well managed as if possessed by private proprietors: the restoration of the estates would tend very much to the improvement and prosperity of the country. The bill experienced some opposition in the house of lords; the objections proceeded not from the substance, but the lateness of the season, and the form in which it was introduced; all these, however, were over-ruled, and it was passed into a law.

A law is passed for that purpose.

Labours of Mr. Pitt in investigating

Mr. Pitt found himself necessarily engaged in the laborious business of winding up the accounts of the war,

war, and was compelled, by the burden of floating debt, and the general state of the national finances, to negociate a loan, though in time of peace; but as this measure was obviously unavoidable, in order to make the terms as favourable as possible, instead of granting enormous profit to private or political favourites, he disposed of it to the best bidders. The sum borrowed was six millions; the taxes were chiefly upon articles of accommodation and ornament in dress, furniture, and equipage, or postage, by the restrictions of franking, with some additional duties on liquors. The principle of impost with which he set out, was to bear as lightly as possible on the poorer classes: besides this loan, there was a large debt unfunded, chiefly in navy and exchequer bills, and ordnance debentures. Of these six millions six hundred thousand pounds were funded, and the rest necessarily deferred to the following year. On the 2d day of August, the session was ended, by a speech from the throne; in which his majesty expressed his warmest thanks for the eminent proofs exhibited by parliament of zealous and diligent attention to the public service. The happiest effects were declared to be expected from the provision made for the better government of India, and from the institution of a tribunal so peculiarly adapted to the trial of offences committed in that distant country. The sovereign observed with great satisfaction, the laws which were passed for the preservation and improvement of the revenue. He applauded the zeal and liberality with which the house of commons had provided for the exigencies of the state, though he felt and regretted the necessity in which their exertions originated. A definitive treaty, the king informed the house, was concluded between Britain and the States-general; and the aspect of affairs, as well as the positive assurances from foreign powers, promised a continuance of general tranquillity.

1784. the public accounts.

Supplies.

Loan and taxes.

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1784. Britain resumes her attention to the affairs of the continent.

FOR the last twenty years, England had been so much engaged in her own intestine and colonial dissensions, and afterwards with the American war and its consequences, that she bestowed much less attention on the general concerns of Europe, than at any former period of her history since the revolution. From the commencement of Mr. Pitt's administration, while recovering her internal prosperity, she resumed her importance among foreign nations. During the remaining portion of our narrative, her interests became so interwoven with those of continental

nental powers, that the general state of Europe must occupy a larger share of the history than has been hitherto necessary.

State of foreign powers.

THE empress of Russia had not been engaged in any great war since the peace concluded in 1774 with Turkey; she nevertheless was actively employed in schemes of external aggrandizement as well as of internal improvement. Catharine's objects were to extend over Germany, and her more northern vicinity, her influence and power, so much increased by her acquisitions in Poland; on the other side to make herself mistress of the Turkish empire; through the extent of coast which she should then possess on the Euxine and the Mediterranean: in addition to her maritime territories in the north, she proposed to attain a commercial and naval eminence, proportioned to her territorial power, rapidly increase the value of her immense dominions, and become decidedly superior to every other sovereign. The end was grand, nor were the means ill adapted. At peace herself, she had carefully surveyed the circumstances, situation, and character of other states and princes. As the supreme obstacle to maritime exaltation would be Britain, the confederacy formed against the mistress of the ocean was consonant to her wishes, and, without open and direct hostilities, she endeavoured to promote its success. This naturally produced a connexion between her and France, the ancient ally of Turkey, the chief object of Catharine's ambition. The sagacious empress, penetrating into the characters of other princes, availed herself of either their strength or weakness, and applied to their ruling passions to gratify her own. The king of Prussia, she well knew, she never could render an instrument for effecting her purposes, though she might procure him as a co-adjutor when co-operation with Russia suited his own. She was aware that he would instantly dive into her designs, and effectually obstruct them if they were likely

Situation and views of Catharine.

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likely ever remotely to interfere with his interests. Besides, in her principal scheme, his co-operation could not directly advance her designs, even if he were so disposed. From the situation and power of his dominions, the emperor would be the most effectual auxiliary; and to his personal character, she did not doubt she could apply with success.

Character and projects of the emperor Joseph.

Joseph was fond of distinction, without the means of acquiring it by great and meritorious qualities. Ardently desirous of increasing his power, without solid and vigorous capacity to gratify his favourite passion, he was one of those secondary characters, bustling, busy, and active, which in all ages and ranks have been efficacious tools, moved and guided by superior ability. Joseph, she well knew, from his power and vicinity, would be a most useful instrument in her designs upon Turkey, either of encroachment, which she at the time meditated, or of subjugation, which though at a more distant period she no less firmly intended. That she might the more readily win over Joseph to second her views, in the year 1780 she requested a personal conference; they met at Mohilof, and there Catharine thoroughly confirmed the opinion which she had conceived of his abilities and character, and after having impressed him with the highest opinion of her own genius and accomplishments, she appeared to make him the repository of her most secret designs.

Catharine courts his alliance,

She represented to him the advantages that would accrue to both empires from a close political union; and the practicability that, by such a connexion, they might share the spoils of Turkey, and each acquiring both an extensive and productive accession of dominions contiguous to their respective territories, their concert, when so increased in power, would enable them to direct the affairs of the German empire. Joseph very readily acceded, both to the expediency of the object, and feasibility of the plan. It was agreed that Catharine

tharine should return to her capital, and that Joseph, after making a circuitous tour through the Russian provinces, should repair to Petersburgh. There they more completely digested their schemes, and a firm alliance was established between the two imperial sovereigns. CHAP. XXXIII. 1784. and a treaty is included.

CATHARINE found that from the late cessions in Turkey she derived great and rapid advantages; her commerce on the Black Sea daily extended its progress; the Russian vessels passed the Dardanelles, and went to traffic at Aleppo, at Smyrna, and in the Italian ports. By so great and increasing benefits, the desire of Catharine was inflamed to extend the kind of possessions from which they arose. The Crimea, so well known in ancient history and poetry as the Taurica Chersonesus, the scene of exquisite tragedy, is a peninsula which projects into the Euxine from the Palus Mœotis, or the sea of Azoff. This country, celebrated for its fertility and commerce, and filled with populous towns and cities, was formerly a dependency upon Turkey, and had been, at the last peace, declared to be a neutral principality, under one of the Tartarian khans, or chieftains. The empress studiously fomented dissensions between the ruling prince and his brother, a pretender to the sovereignty, expecting that the former, whom she professed to favour and protect, would implore her assistance, and thus afford a pretext for sending Russian troops into the Crimea. The Tartar solicited the assistance of Catharine, as that ambitious princess desired. The empress, secure of meeting no interruption from Joseph, and well-knowing the feebleness of the Turks, invaded the peninsula with a powerful army, still professing that her intention was to relieve the khan. She left him the shadow of power; but taking all the substance to herself, she became absolute mistress of the Crimea. Having ascertained the success of the iniquitous invasion, she published one of those manifestoes, Catherine's invasion of the Crimea. Seizure of that country.

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nifestoes, in which modern aggressors and conquerors render due homage *in words* to that justice and rectitude which THEIR ACTIONS are grossly violating. In this curious monument of imperial reasoning she affirmed, that her successes in the late war had given her a right to the Crimea, which from her sincere desire of peace she had sacrificed to the wishes of the Ottoman Porte; that she had proposed the happiness of the Crimeans by procuring to them liberty and independence, under the authority of a chief elected by themselves. But those benevolent wishes had been grievously disappointed: revolt and rebellion had arisen; to suppress which, and restore tranquillity and happiness, from the same philanthropic motives she had been induced, at a very great expence of money and loss of troops, to interfere, for the beneficent purpose of preventing the recurrence of such evils; and had undertaken, once for all, the firm resolution of terminating the troubles of the Crimea. The measures which she had employed, the manifesto farther affirmed, were also intended to perpetuate the peace between Russia and the Porte. In this bountiful display of virtue, seeking the temporal comforts of its objects, Catharine did not forget their eternal happiness, and promised her new subjects a full and free toleration of their religion. The Turks were extremely enraged at this usurpation of Catharine, but did not at that time conceive themselves strong enough to commence hostilities.

Measures of internal improvement.

MEANWHILE the empress was engaged in improving her own country, and in connecting herself more closely with Joseph. In pursuing the former of these objects, she promoted manufactures, trade, voyages, and expeditions of discovery; particularly for exploring the resources of those dominions which were remote from the metropolis, and not under her own immediate inspection. She endeavoured as much

much as possible to facilitate communication between distant parts of Russia, and especially by water conveyance. She had projected to open a navigation between the White Sea and the Baltic, by a line of canals which should join the gulph of Finland, the lakes of Ladoga and Onega, and the river Dwina, and thus save traders with Archangel the dangerous voyage round Cape North; but on a survey of the interjacent country, abounding with rocks and mountains, the scheme was judged to be impracticable. She attempted to establish an intercourse between her eastern and western dominions, by opening a canal between the Pruth, which falls into the Wolga, and the Mista, that communicates by lakes with a river which falls into the Baltic, that so there might be a commercial traffic carried on between the maritime regions of Europe, and the inland recesses of northern Asia; and this great design was fully accomplished. CHAP. XXXIII. 1784.

THE policy of Russia respecting foreign alliances, was of much more questionable wisdom, than her schemes of internal improvement. The former princes of Muscovy had uniformly cultivated a close intercourse with England; desirous of naval and commercial aggrandizement, Catharine conceived that the trade and maritime power of Britain were the chief obstructions to her own, and from this opinion rather discouraged than promoted amity with these realms. Were a person in private life to observe, that it is the interest of venders of commodities to cultivate a close connexion with their best customers, he would be charged with advancing a self-evident proposition, which no man in his senses could deny, either as an abstract truth, or as a prudent rule of conduct. Undeniable as it is, yet Catharine was not guided by this principle. The commerce with England is essential to Russia. No merchants with smaller capitals, or less commercial spirit than the English, will

It is the interest of Russia to cultivate amity with Britain.

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will or can advance such sums of money long before the period of return, to invigorate the manufactures, employ the people in a wide and poor country, and enable the small traders to bring their goods to market from remote districts. Without this application of British capital, industry ceasing to be productive, trade and manufactures would languish, and all the efforts of Catharine for stimulating the industry of her subjects, must become less valuable, in the proportion that her policy decreased the English market. Most of the articles that her dominions could supply, might be procured from America; and should repulsive conduct drive Britain from Russia into other channels of import, it would be a loss to her commerce, which from no other source she could compensate. Never could, or can, Russia profit by disagreement with England. Influenced, however, in this important instance by narrow and unavailing jealousy, instead of her usual enlarged policy, she conducted herself inimically to the nation with which it was her chief interest to maintain the strictest friendship. She continued to cultivate an amicable correspondence with France, and the closest union with Joseph, whom she ardently seconded in schemes which now occupied the chief attention of Europe.

Her conduct to Britain not consistent with her usual wisdom.

Since the year 1781, Joseph II., by the death of his mother, the empress-queen, had been the sole sovereign of the Austrian dominions; and being now free from restraint, fully exhibited that character which was before discovered by the discerning, but had not yet been displayed to the world. Possessing lively but superficial talents, the emperor was extremely desirous of fame and distinction. Without original genius to concert great schemes, Joseph was the creature of imitation, and had formed himself on the model of the king of Prussia, as far as his conception of that extraordinary character, reached. Among many objects which called forth the exertion

Presuming projects of the emperor.

tion of Frederic's astonishing powers, two principally occupied his attention; the acquirement of productive territories, and the improvement of all his possessions, according to their physical, political, and commercial resources, including the advancement of the general character of his subjects. His efforts ably, skilfully, and constantly directed to one or both of these objects, had been so successful as to raise Prussia from being a small and secondary principality, to the first rank among the powers of Europe. Joseph attempted both to improve and extend the Austrian possessions; his means did not, however, bear much resemblance to the designs of his archetype. Frederic directed his efforts to increase national prosperity in its various constituents; whatever opinions he himself might have formed on the subject of religion, he was far from judging it expedient to interfere with the established notions of his subjects, or to subvert any of those establishments, which, either in themselves or by habitual associations, cherish sentiments of piety, the surest sources of both the private and public virtues which exalt a people. If he was a deist, he did not apprehend that his subjects would be the fitter without religion for either defending or improving his dominions. Like many others of no great talents, Joseph considered indifference to religion as a source of distinction; he was ostentatious in infidelity, and wished it, under the name of liberality, to spread through his territories. One measure which he adopted, was certainly in itself equitable; he disclaimed all dependence in secular affairs on the pope of Rome: he justly deemed it totally inconsistent with the rights and dignity of an independent sovereign, to acknowledge subordination to a foreign priest. The emperor greatly increased toleration in the various parts of his dominions, and in general extended religious liberty to Jews and all other sects and denominations. So far his policy appeared

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Suppression of religious orders.

appeared wise and liberal; but counsels and acts right in themselves, may be wrong as part of a general system. The emperor was a *reforming projector*, and in the ardour of his zeal for change, very far exceeded expediency: the suppression of the religious orders, and confiscation of their property, were the principal objects of his innovating plans. In 1782, he issued imperial decrees for suppressing monasteries, convents, and every species of religious fraternities or sisterhoods, and took possession of all their lands and moveables. A commission was established for the administration of the sequestered estates and effects, which were so considerable, that the most moderate calculators supposed that the emperor could gain four or five millions sterling by the reform.[a] Annual stipends were allotted for the maintenance of the reformed abbots, abbesses, canons, canonesses, monks and nuns, which were in some degree proportioned to their respective rank and condition; but it was heavily complained, that the portions were so scantily measured, as to be shamefully inadequate to the purpose. A reform, involving in it such an extensive robbery, was by no means applauded by distinguishing and wise men, as consistent with either justice or sound policy. The spoliation rendered the whole measure more particularly odious than it otherwise might have been; and whatever means were at home employed to stifle complaint, they could not restrain the censure of foreigners upon the conduct of this prince. Many conceived that his object was to plunder the church; that the

[a] The celebrated Mirabeau makes the following observations upon these changes: —The internal revolutions which the emperor has effected in his dominions have been greatly applauded; but what a number of objections might be brought against these eulogiums; at least, the panegyrists of Joseph the second ought to tell us what justice they find in driving a citizen from the profession which he has embraced, under the sanction of the laws. I will tell them plainly, that there is as much injustice in expelling a friar, or a nun, from their retreat, as in turning a private individual out of his house. Despise the friars as much as you will, but do not persecute them; above all, do not rob them; for we ought not either to persecute or rob any man, from the avowed atheist down to the most credulous capuchin.

pillage

pillage (instead of being applied to any useful or benevolent purpose) was intended merely for the support of his ambitious projects; and that he had concerted with Russia, plans of mutual co-operation, in order to aggrandize both powers. The situation of maritime Europe had afforded to the Austrian Netherlands mercantile benefit, which inspired Joseph with the hopes of acquiring naval and commercial importance. The war that pervaded western Europe had transferred from Holland to Austrian Flanders and Brabant that immense trade, which, through the canals and great German rivers, England carried on with the eastern and northern countries of the continent. The benefits which the Netherlands derived from this transit of so great a commerce, were still farther increased, by the peculiar circumstances of the naval war in which Britain was involved; attacked at once in every part of the world, England was frequently under the necessity of abandoning the protection of her European commerce, that her foreign fleets might be sufficiently powerful to cover her very numerous distant possessions; and British merchants were obliged to use foreign vessels for the conveyance of their goods. From the operation of these causes, Ostend became a general mart of all the neutral as well as belligerent states; and such an influx of trade was carried into that city and port, that even early in the war it reached a degree of opulence and commercial importance, which it never before enjoyed, or was expected to attain. The spirit of mercantile adventure was rapidly diffused through the Austrian Low Countries; the desire and hope of acquiring immense riches universally operated: Brussels itself, notwithstanding the habitual ease and love of pleasure incident to its situation, and the long residence of a court, could not escape the infection; and many of its inhabitants, who had never before engaged in commerce of any kind, now laid out all their

His schemes of naval and commercial aggrandizement.

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their ready money in building ships. The citizens of Antwerp regretted the loss of their former trade, riches, and splendor; and conceived hopes of the possible recovery of those valuable advantages. Indeed, the spirit now excited was so prevalent, that the states of the Netherlands presented a memorial to the emperor, requesting that he would take measures for the re-establishment of that port. Meanwhile the growing opulence of Ostend was immense; the limits of the city became too narrow for its inhabitants, and the buildings were not sufficient to cover the immense quantities of merchandize, of which it was become the temporary depository: traders and speculators continually arrived to participate such benefits, and rapidly rising population was in proportion to the sudden flow of riches. Elated with unexpected prosperity, the inhabitants little regarded the circumstance in which it originated, and forgot that, as the cause was transitory, the effect was not likely to be permanent. Such was the state of affairs and sentiments in the Netherlands when the emperor arrived in June 1781, at Ostend: struck with the flourishing condition in which he found this port, impressed with the exulting hopes of the inhabitants, and devoid of that comprehensive sagacity which could distinguish between special and general causes, with the precipitancy of superficial reasoners, he concluded that the prosperity which was then prevalent must always last. In his tour through the Netherlands he bestowed the greatest attention upon merchants, and every object connected with merchandize. Arrived at Antwerp, he in his conduct exhibited views of interfering in the navigation of the Scheldt. He went down that river in a boat, as far as to the first of those Dutch forts, which had been erected to guard the passage, and to secure to the states the exclusive command of the river; he had the depth of the channel ascertained in several places, and he strictly examined

examined all the obstructions of art and nature which tended to impede its navigation. Joseph had also farther objects in view, which he thought the situation of Holland, weakened by her impolitic war with her natural ally, would enable him to accomplish.

At the conclusion of the succession war, as many readers must know, the principal fortresses of the Austrian Netherlands were deposited in the hands of the Dutch, for the mutual benefit and security of the court of Vienna and themselves; and while they formed a powerful barrier to cover the territories of the states, they were to be garrisoned and defended by them, and thus serve to obviate the danger apprehended from the power and ambition of France. During the weakness of Austria in the beginning of Maria Teresa's reign, she derived considerable advantages from this treaty; but now that he was become so powerful, the emperor thought himself fully competent to protect and defend his own dominions, and, being master of great armies, he conceived that he did not want fortresses to impede the progress of an enemy. Thinking it derogatory to his own honour, as well as to the dignity and power of the empire, that a great number of his principal cities and fortresses should be garrisoned, and at his own expence, he proposed to resume the barrier. To justify the intended measure, he stated that, in the last war between Austria and France, the Dutch had shewn themselves incapable of maintaining the fortresses; that, besides, the state of affairs was now so entirely altered, that none of the causes or motives which originally operated to the establishment of the barrier, any longer existed. France, instead of being the common enemy, as then, was now the common friend of both parties; her ambition was no longer dangerous, and if it were, was directed to other objects; the emperor and she were mutually

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tually bound in the strictest and dearest ties of friendship and blood. On the side of Holland, it was alleged that Austria was indebted to Britain and the States-general for the possession of the Low Countries; and that, as these were the great leaders in the succession war, they compelled France and Spain to cede the Netherlands to Austria. The settlement of the barrier was the only compensation to Holland for all these services, and her immense expences of blood and treasure, to place the grandfather of the present emperor on the throne of Spain. Besides, being a direct breach of treaty and violation of faith, the proposed measure would be a shameful dereliction of every sense of past service and obligation; and the season chosen for its accomplishment, under the present embarrassed and depressed state of the republic, would render it still more disgraceful. These arguments, however strong, were of little avail against the power of Joseph; and the Dutch were compelled to yield.

Dismantles the fortresses of the Netherlands.

The emperor dismantled the fortresses; and thus Holland, through her folly in going to war with England, was stripped of her barrier, for which she had often and vigorously fought. Her most valuable resources being exhausted by war, that unhappy country had the additional calamity of being torn asunder by factions; peace had neither restored vigour and unanimity at home, nor reputation and importance abroad: on the contrary, their civil dissensions were every day increasing in magnitude and virulence. The faction hostile to the stadtholder, and connected with France, was now become so strong, that no sufficient counterpoise remained in the state, to restrain the excess and violence incident to the predominance of political parties. The emperor made various claims upon the Dutch frontiers, and did not want pretexts that gave a plausible colouring to meditated injustice. But of all his claims, the most distressing to

to Holland were the claims upon the city and country of Maestricht, the entire and free navigation of the Scheldt from Antwerp to the sea, and a free and uninterrupted commerce to the factories of Holland in both the East and West Indies. The Dutch alleged, that the emperor claimed all the benefits which were derived from their colonies in the New World, and their conquests and settlements in the East, being the fruits of much hard adventure, great risque, and advance of treasure, of numberless treaties and negociations, and of many severe wars through the course of near two centuries. The rights of the republic, and particularly her exclusive sovereignty of the Scheldt, had been confirmed, and guaranteed to her by all the treaties which secure the political existence of Europe. The claim upon Maestricht was founded upon obsolete pretences; important as the place was, however, it was only a matter of secondary consideration, and altogether subordinate to the Scheldt. The assertion of the emperor was founded on what he called the natural rights of countries to the navigation and benefit of a river which ran through his territories; whereas the possession of Holland rested on positive and specific compact. A recurrence to the original rights of man, the Dutch justly contended, would destroy those social agreements between individuals and political conventions, which constitute and secure all private and public property. Such a principle, practically admitted, would unloose every bond that unites mankind, throw them into a state of nature, and render the world a chaos of confusion and disorder. However just these arguments were, the emperor paid no regard to reasoning so opposite to his ambitious views. He saw in several concessions the fears of the Dutch, and trusted that their dread of his power would make them desist from the maintenance of their own rights. The moral principle, indeed,

He proposes to open the Scheldt.

Arguments on both sides.

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Joseph's allegations entirely contrary to justice.

indeed, of his conduct was very simple: the Dutch are weak, I am strong; I intend to rob them of their property, and they will be afraid to resist. In this belief, he tried the experiment, by equipping two vessels, of which one was to proceed down the Scheldt from Antwerp to the sea, and the other up the river from the sea, on its course from Ostend to that city. The captain of the former of these was furnished with written orders from the emperor, commanding him to proceed in the brig Louis, from Antwerp along the Scheldt into the sea, and expressly forbidding him and his crew to submit to any detention, or to any examination whatever from ships belonging to the republic, which he might meet in the river, or in any manner acknowledge their authority. The imperial ship passed the Lilu and some other forts without examination, but falling in with a Dutch cutter that sent a boat with an officer to the vessel from Antwerp, the imperial captain told the Dutchman, THAT HE WAS ON HIS PASSAGE TO THE SEA; and that his instructions forbid his holding any parley whatever with the officers or ships of the United Provinces. The cutter now coming up to the brig, the imperialist quoted the instructions of his master, and refused to give any further satisfaction, persevering to sail towards the sea. The commander of the cutter entreated, threatened and employed every means to induce the other to desist from conduct which would necessarily bring the affair to a crisis; but finding his efforts unavailing, he determined to prevent such an unjust and insolent usurpation. He fired first powder without ball, but at length poured a broadside, and threatened with the next discharge to sink his opponent if he continued refractory: the imperialist, seeing it was vain to contend, relinquished his object. The ship from Ostend was no less disappointed in the expectations of getting undisputed up the river. The emperor pretended to consider

consider this spirited defence of their own right, as an aggression on the part of the Dutch. The imperial ambassador was recalled from the Hague, and an army of sixty thousand men was under orders and in preparation for marching from the Austrian hereditary dominions to the Netherlands. The troops which were already there, amounted to about sixteen thousand men; great trains of artillery, and all the other apparatus of war, were in motion. Exhausted as they were by the war with England, the Dutch made very vigorous preparations; they employed agents to hire troops from Germany; and at home they exerted themselves in recruiting the troops, strengthening the frontiers, and putting the posts and garrisons in the best posture of defence. They prepared for the last refuge which the nature of their country peculiarly afforded, and resolved to open the dykes and lay the Flat Countries under water. While they were thus making provisions for hostility, they endeavoured to appease Joseph by reasonable and equitable expostulation; though they were very far from being disposed, they said, to go to war with the emperor, they were bound by all the laws of nature, of nations, of justice, and of reason, not to permit a violation of their dearest and most incontrovertible rights.

The Dutch prepare to defend their rights.

Russia was at this time closely connected with the emperor, and though she had lately sought the alliance of Holland, and made the republic the tool of her ambition in the armed neutrality, she now warmly and openly seconded the pretensions of Joseph. Catharine, in a letter to the king of Prussia, roundly asserted that the Dutch were in the wrong, and the emperor equally just, moderate, and disinterested. The amount of her reasoning was, that the law of nature gave the Austrian Netherlands the exclusive right of the navigation of the Scheldt, and that the Dutch, in quoting specific treaties to support their claims, manifested an avi-

Russia supports the pretensions of the emperor.

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dity which was notorious and blameable in every respect. Nothing well founded (she said, in the conclusion of her letter) can be alleged in favour of Holland; therefore she merits no assistance from any foreign power. The consequences which these republicans are drawing upon themselves by their obstinacy, must be submitted to the moderation of the emperor alone: I am firmly resolved to assist his pretensions with all my land and sea forces, and with as much efficacy as if the welfare of my own empire was in agitation. I hope that this declaration of my sentiments will meet with the success which our reciprocal friendship deserves, and which has never been interrupted.[a] These maxims of imperial ethics were not more contrary to the moral judgment of impartial individuals, clearly apprehending and fairly estimating right and wrong, than the imperial politics of both the sovereigns were to the obvious interests of neighbouring potentates. The king of Prussia, it was foreseen, would not be an idle spectator of such an accession accruing to his rival. France, for her own security, would protect Holland against so formidable a neighbour, and was not without farther inducements to oppose the emperor, even should actual hostilities be the consequence. To the arms of France the rich provinces of the Low Countries were most likely to have recourse, especially now that the fortresses on the barrier were demolished. Notwithstanding the affinity between the royal families of Vienna and Versailles, his most Christian majesty made very pressing remonstrances to the emperor; he justified the conduct of the Dutch, and urged his imperial majesty not to persevere in violating these important rights, which were so solemnly secured; he hoped the emperor would desist from efforts, which would cause so general

Prussia and France unfriendly to the emperor's demands.

[a] See translation of this Letter in the State Papers, 1784, page 352.

an alarm among his neighbours; and other powers would think themselves obliged to take such precautions and measures as circumstances and events might require. The king himself must, in that case, be under the necessity of assembling troops on his frontiers, and could not, by any means, be indifferent to the fate of the United Provinces, nor see them attacked by open force in their rights and possessions. The remonstrances of France made no impression upon the emperor; he considered the free navigation of the Scheldt as an incontrovertible right, which was subject to no discussion or question. The Netherlands was fast filling with his troops, and winter only retarded hostile operations.

Britain is disposed to protect the rights of Holland.

GREAT Britain observed all those proceedings with a watchful eye, but did not commit herself by any hasty declaration. The views of the British cabinet were great and extensive; it was planned, to secure Holland from the aggressions of her neighbours, and to detach her from a connexion with France. This project, however, was then only in contemplation, being by no means fit for execution.

Britain recovers from the distresses of the war.

BRITAIN was now recovering fast from the distresses of the war; trade was reviving; by the prevention of fraud the revenue was becoming much more productive; and industry and enterprise were again roused by the rekindled hopes of success. So lately drooping, this country now raised her head; a benignant season added to the improvements of her condition, and in present comfort the people soon forgot recent distress: prospects of returning prosperity opened, and the people were satisfied with government, whose measures they expected would greatly increase and accelerate private and public prosperity. The great demands of our distant possessions, precluded during the war from regular and sufficient supply, afforded a very large vent for

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the productions and acquisitions of British industry and skill. The Americans too, communication being again opened, eagerly flocked in quest of British wares, the superior excellence of which compulsory disuse had only imprinted the more deeply on their minds. The restored islands of the West Indies furnished a considerable market for our commodities; the want of which, while under the dominion of our enemies, they had so sensibly felt. The settlements also which remained in our possession, had been but sparingly provided while hostile fleets hovered on their coasts, and not yet having fully recovered from the scourge of the hurricanes, called for a great portion of our merchandize. Of our foreign settlements, the chief vent after the peace was the East, in which the supply had not been by any means so liberal as the wants of British India required; but during this, and some years after the war, the outward trade of the company very far exceeded the usual periods of peace.[b] Our commerce with our late maritime enemies of Europe revived, although it was easily seen that systems might be formed, respecting every branch of trade, which would render them much more productive.

Miscellaneous occurrences. Death of Dr. Johnson, and a short view of literature and science at his decease.

THIS year England lost one of the brightest ornaments that had graced her literary annals during a century, with which he was almost coëval. In December 1784, died Dr. Samuel Johnson, in the 76th year of his age, after a long and tormenting illness, which he bore with fortitude and resignation, worthy of his other virtues. Literary history af-

[b] This great and general benefit to skilful and judicious adventurers, as well as to the public, was attended with partial evil, in the ruin of those traders, who did not distinguish the real nature of the case, and who confounded temporary with general causes. Finding that very large profits had been made by a variety of articles during the first voyages after the war, not a few of the company's officers in the shipping service, and their connexion at home, carried out investments of the same kind, until they glutted the market and lost their former profits, and from their misjudging eagerness of avarice completely defeated their own purposes and became bankrupts; but skilful and able traders continued to realize fortunes.

fords

fords few instances of such a combination of intellectual and moral qualities as constituted the character, and prompted and guided the efforts, of Samuel Johnson. An understanding perspicacious, powerful, and comprehensive; an imagination vigorous, fertile, and brilliant; and a memory retentive, accurate, and stored with valuable knowledge, were uniformly directed to render mankind wise, virtuous, and religious. The most successful and beneficial exertions of this illustrious sage were exhibited, in philology, criticism, biography, and ethics. On subjects of language, Johnson displayed science as well as knowledge; he not only collected usages, but investigated principles; applying and modifying general analogies, according to the circumstances of the particular cases, he extremely enriched the English tongue, and improved it in precision and force. The style which his precept and example formed, bore the stamp of his mind and habits, being less distinguished for elegance and delicacy, than for perspicuity and strength: his expression, however, was perhaps not the most useful as a general model, because its excellence depended on its conformity to his vigorous sentiments and thought. Since the time of Aristotle few have equalled Johnson as a critic, either in principles of estimation, or in actually appreciating defect and excellence. Surveying models rather than considering ends, many critics of distinguished acuteness and knowledge of literature conceived that meritorious execution consists in resemblance to certain celebrated performances; but these, justly and highly applauded, do not include every possible means of deserving applause. Disregarding mere usage and authority, Johnson followed nature and reason: in rating the value of a Shakespeare, he did not esteem the mode of Grecian arrangement the criterion of judgment, but the exhibited operation of passion, sentiment, and cha-

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racter, and its conformity to real life. He estimated works of imitation by their likeness to originals, combined with the importance of object and difficulty of delineation. As a biographer, Dr. Johnson is unequalled; he indeed possessed the highest requisites for that important species of writing: he thoroughly knew the constitution and movements of the human understanding and will; was intimately conversant with the kind of circumstances in which his subjects acted; and the usual and probable operation of such causes: he completely knew their individual history, comprehended their character, and had the power of clearly conveying to others, and forcibly impressing, his thoughts, opinions, and conceptions. Though the most valuable ethics are diffused through all his works, yet two of his productions are more peculiarly appropriated to those subjects. His Rambler shewed more of man in his general nature, as he himself says of Dryden; his Idler, as he says of Pope, more of man in his local manners. His Rambler was the work of a profound, comprehensive philosopher; his Idler, of genius and learning experienced in life: the former describes men as they always are, the latter as they then were in England. It may be easily and obviously objected to the political writings of Johnson, that they were by no means equal in either knowledge or wisdom to his other productions. A whig zealot might exclaim against the high-church bigotry, theological intolerance, and arbitrary politics of this great man, as a tory zealot might depreciate Milton, because a puritan and republican; but the impartial observer, making allowance for human infirmities, will see prejudices and unfounded opinions totally outweighed by transcendent excellencies. The historian of the present reign, if he narrate the truth, after balancing the good and the bad, must admit that few either lived or died in it of such great and beneficially directed wisdom

wisdom as Samuel Johnson. Besides the vast accession of knowledge and instruction accruing to mankind from the individual efforts of this extraordinary man, his conversation and writings stimulated and formed many others to meritorious compositions. The disciples of the Johnsonian school, whatever might be their several diversities of ability and character, have written to promote religion, order and virtue. Having made such important additions to the general mass of information and instruction, he taught by precept and example the most efficacious processes of reasoning, and the surest test of truth; he exhibited the close connexion between clearness of conception and precision of expression, and afforded materials and principles of thought and judgment, with directions and examples for estimating fairly, and conveying ideas and sentiments with clearness, force, and effect. Scholars of moderate talents, who neither evince depth of reflection, vigour of invention, or brilliancy of fancy, are now accurate composers, and competent estimators of literary merit. Through Johnson respectable mediocrity of ability and learning has been prompted and enabled to direct its patient and industrious efforts to the useful purposes, not only of just criticism, but loyal and patriotic, virtuous and religious inculcation. Perhaps, however, the literary efforts of Dr. Johnson may have been more beneficial to other writers, than to his own particular associates; from the latter, they come to the world tinctured with his particular prejudices; among the former, they have often diffused unalloyed portions of his general wisdom and virtue.

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As the death of Dr. Johnson is an epoch in the literary history of the times, it may not here be unseasonable to give a short sketch of literary efforts at this period. The American war had produced a vast multiplicity of political pamphlets, of which, though the greater number were of only a tempo-

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rary interest, yet some, from the ability of the writers, the importance of the principles, and the receptions of the doctrines, were of much more permanent consequence. Two men of considerable talents and high reputation engaging in this controversy, broached opinions of a very unconstitutional tendency: these were, Doctors Richard Price and Joseph Priestley, gentlemen who from nature and study possessed the means of promoting, to a great extent, the benefit of society, were disposed to use their talents for those meritorious purposes, and had actually employed them with very great success, in certain paths, to the good of mankind; yet were now active in exerting them in pursuit of objects, or at least in inculcating doctrines of a very injurious tendency to the existing establishments. With genius competent to any subject of literary or scientific investigation, and deeply skilled in calculation, Price had peculiarly distinguished himself by inquiries into population, and by financial research. Priestley, by his discoveries in chemistry, electricity, pneumatics, and subjects relative to these, had made valuable additions to physical knowledge and science, both for theoretical contemplation and practical use. These two philosophers were dissenters, and dissenters of a class which has generally carried dissent beyond theological opinions, and has incorporated politics. Men, at once able and ambitious, if they happen to find themselves in a minority, very naturally seek to render that minority a majority. In situations of peace by making converts, as in situations of war by making conquests, aspiring leaders seek power. From calculations and from chemical researches, Doctors Price and Priestley betook themselves to politics, and to theological controversy, which was intended to minister to politics; adopted the visionary theories which the profound wisdom of Locke had not prevented from pervading his opinions

nions in politics, with many of the hypothetical comments which had joined them in the course of the century: these they inculcated as the just conclusions of political wisdom, and the proper rules for political conduct. Besides the treatises already mentioned, they published various works, which refined on Locke's fiction of a social compact, and represented every system of government as necessarily bad, that had not originated in a convention of men assembled for the purpose of forming a constitution; consequently, as no existing government had been so constituted, concluding that every established polity was necessarily unjust. So far as these speculations were merely exercises of metaphysical ingenuity, they might be accounted innocent pastimes; but whether intended or not to be harmless, they certainly were not designed to be inefficient; they were most industriously circulated by the secondary instruments, which, in the literary as well as the political world, are in such numbers ready to repeat even the errors of conceived genius; and by the authors themselves, among those who were most disposed to take their assertions as arguments. Price, though constant in his principle, was more desultory and occasional in his operations: eminent in certain departments of learning, Priestley had attempted to grasp at every subject of human knowledge, and, in the midst of his endeavours at universality, directed his principal efforts towards one great object, the subversion of the ecclesiastical establishment. It is now obvious, by considering the whole series of his conduct, that he had early formed the design of overturning our hierarchy, which he himself afterwards acknowledged with triumphant exultation for the imagined success. Priestley appeared to have proceeded on the following principle: "I, and a minority of this nation, do not approve of any establishment, especially of the church of England, her

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her constitution and doctrines, supported by the majority of the nation; as we, a *smaller number*, with *not more* than our own proportion of ability and property, cannot agree with the GREATER NUMBER, we must make THEM agree with our creed."[c] Seeking the downfal of the church, Dr. Priestley formed a plan, consisting of two parts; the first to attack the articles of her faith, the next the muniments of her establishment. The former part of his scheme, which was indeed preparatory to the latter, at present chiefly engaged his attention. For several years he had been strenuously labouring to overturn the Christian doctrine of the Trinity; this being an article of faith, which the greater number of Christians, and especially those of the church of England, deem essential to the gospel, and consequently to every establishment by which the gospel is cherished. An attack upon so fundamental a part of our religion was by no means an impolitical movement; nor was it carried on without great dexterity. In adducing the common arguments of often exploded sophistry, his genius gave to triteness a colour of originality, and to superficial declamation an appearance of profound reasoning, which, on many even of those not borne down by the authority of his name, made a very strong impression. While the generalissimo of heresy was himself thus employed, he had distributed his officers and troops with great skill in different posts and positions, according to his knowledge of their ability, skill, and zeal for the cause. Our ecclesiastical establishment, however, did not want a defender, who was at once ardent, able, and well-provided with the means of guarding the church against the assailant. Dr. Sa-

[c] It must be admitted by any liberal friend of the church, on the one hand, that if Dr. Priestley conscientiously intended the temporal and eternal happiness of his countrymen, and not his own aggrandizement, he was morally justifiable; but a liberal dissenter, on the other hand, must admit, that all those whose opinion was different, whether moralists or statesmen, were equally justifiable in impugning his arguments and repelling his attacks.

muel

muel Horsley brought an acute and powerful mind, disciplined and formed by science, and stored with general and theological learning, to support the faith which he had embraced, and the venerable body of which he was a member. The Unitarian controversy, which for several years maintained by misconstruing ingenuity, and re-assertion of often-confuted arguments; by obstinate iteration of sophistry on the one hand, and on the other, by plain interpretation, deductive reasoning, fair inference, and firm adherence to positions so founded; now occupied a great share of lettered efforts and attention.[d] Controversies arising from some parts of Gibbon's history were also very prevalent: the author, however, engaged little in the disputes; he was persevering in his able, learned, and approved work, in which, though the pious must disrelish the antichristian tendency of several parts, and the acute may discover assertion without proof adduced to support favourite notions, yet every reader of judgment, comprehension, and philosophical and political knowledge, must allow that it is an illustrious monument of industry and genius, which lightens readers through the darkness of the middle ages, and exhibits man in various stages of declining society, until he terminated in barbarism, and, regenerating, began to return towards civilization. Another history had at this time just appeared, that embraced periods much better known to every classical reader; but though it recited transactions with which every literary man was well acquainted, it presented new and profound views, unfolded causes, and marked operations and effects, that even intelligent and learned readers had not before discovered. The philosophical pen of Fergusson rendered the affairs of the greatest people of antiquity the ground-work of the deepest and most

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[d] The Reviews of these years had more than one half of their writings occupied either with this controversy, or the politics of the day.

expanded

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expanded moral and political science; to teach mankind that wisdom, courage, enterprize, and skill, uniformly and constantly exerted in the various departments of a political system, elevate a nation as they exalt an individual, and that folly and vice overturn the fabric which virtue and wisdom had raised. Works of an inferior species to history, though pursuing the same object, travels and voyages, much increased our knowledge of the interior and civil condition of various countries, with which our acquaintance before had been chiefly confined to geographical outlines and political relations. The travels of Messrs. Moore, Wraxal, Coxe, and others, into various parts of Europe, not only afforded amusement and entertainment, but knowledge of mankind. The voyages of the renowned circumnavigator, captain Cook, which displayed human nature in a light shewing at once its varieties and uniformity, were a pleasing and interesting accession of literary novelty.

Improvement of the present age in natural philosophy and chemistry.

PHYSICAL knowledge and science were making rapid advances, while, from former discoveries of philosophy, invention and experience were fast educing arts which administered to the purposes of life. Doctors Black and Watson were persevering in their chemical pursuits, and powerfully contributing to the elucidation of subjects, curious to speculative, and useful to practical men; with which, through the abilities and labours of such men, followed by many others of patient research and useful industry, who were employed in experimental detail, the public is now become so conversant.

Invention of air balloons.

THE immense improvements of the present age, in the general analysis of material substances, and particularly in the application of chemistry to the qualities of air, produced about this time an invention that astonished mankind, by an artificial phenomenon, which appeared to realize the fable of Dædalus, and to find a passage for man through the

the air. Eminent philosophers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the qualities of air had inferred the practicability of such an undertaking, but did not explore the means. The discovery was reserved for the ingenuity of two French manufacturers of paper at Annouay in Dauphiny, Messrs. Montgolfier. These gentlemen, observing the ascent of vapour or smoke in the atmosphere, concluded that the general principle was the ascent of air rarified by absorption, and that it must ascend until it arrive at air of such a tenuity as to prove an exact equilibrium. On this reasoning they constructed a globular machine of paper and fine silk, covered with elastic gum; in short, of the very lightest terrene materials. This ball, being about thirty feet in circumference, was raised to a considerable height, merely by applying some lighted combustibles to an aperture at its lower extremity. If so small a power of rarified air could raise such a weight, a proportionate increase must raise a proportionably greater weight; hence it was found, by extending the experiment, that a ball of linen of 23,000 cubic feet[e] in dimension, being moved by combustibles, would lift about five hundred weight. Montgolfier soon after presented the experiment at Paris; a sheep, a cock, and a duck, were placed in a gallery next the balloon, and returned without hurt. On the 23d of November 1783, two human beings adventured to essay an element hitherto unexplored by man. The marquis de Landes and monsieur Drosier undertook this extraordinary navigation: at 54 minutes past one o'clock, the machine ascended into the air before an immense number of astonished spectators. When it had reached 250 feet, the intrepid travellers waving their hats saluted the wondering crowd: the aërial navigators were soon beyond the reach of

[e] About twenty-eight and a half, to a figure exactly cubical.

discernment

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discernment from the earth, but the ball itself was seen towering towards the confines of æther. The travellers having found their experiment successful, agreed to descend by gradually lessening the application of air, and arrived safely in an open field at some distance from the city. [f] The event of this experiment with rarified air, encouraged farther trials; Monsieur Charles, the professor of natural philosophy at Paris, suggested the improvement of inflammable air, instead of rarified. In 1784 the experiment was tried in England by Mr. Lunardi, an Italian gentleman. On the 15th of September, this gentleman, about five minutes after two o'clock, ascended from the artillery-ground, before 150,000 people, who were collected in the places immediately adjacent: many of the other inhabitants of London and the environs were gazing from the house-tops; business of every kind appeared to be suspended, and every ray of thought converged into one focus; in short, Lunardi and the balloon occupied general conversation. The sky fortunately was without a cloud, so that his ascent above London was clearly perceived from a distance of many miles around. The balloon took a northerly direction: at half past three, Lunardi arrived at South Mimms, where he descended on a common; but again raising himself, he proceeded in the same direction, and afterwards descended at Ware. [g] Various balloons

Ascent of Lunardi from the Artillery Ground.

Astonishment of the metropolis at this phenomenon.

[f] In an epilogue to a play exhibited at Westminster soon after this experiment, there was a verse containing the following pun on this *Gallic* invention:

"Quis propria Gallo plus levitate valet?"
"Who can surpass a Frenchman in appropriate levity?"

[g] The following passage is quoted from Lunardi's written account of his own voyage, observations, and feelings, when from the aerial heights he looked down upon the British metropolis;—"When the thermometer was at fifty, the effect of the atmosphere, and the combination of circumstances around, produced a calm delight which is inexpressible, and which no situation on earth could give; the stillness, extent, and magnificence of the scene rendered it highly awful; my horizon seemed a perfect circle; the terminating line several hundred miles in circumference. This I conjectured from the view of London, the extreme points of which formed an angle of only a few degrees; it was so reduced on the great scale before me, that I can find no simile to convey an idea of it. I could distinguish St. Paul's and other churches from the houses; I saw the streets as lines, all animated

loons were afterwards launched, in Britain and other parts of the world, and many treatises were published, endeavouring to demonstrate the important advantages which might arise from this invention, but none of them have been hitherto realized.

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animated with beings whom I knew to be men and women, but which I should otherwise have had a difficulty in describing; it was an enormous bee hive, but the industry of it was suspended. Indeed, the whole scene before me filled my mind with a sublime pleasure of which I never had a conception; I had soared from the apprehensions and anxieties of the world, and felt as if I had left behind all the cares and passions that molest mankind." Of the second descent, he gives the following account: — "At twenty minutes past four, I descended in a spacious meadow in the parish of Stondon, near Ware in Hertfordshire; some labourers were at work in it, I requested their assistance; they exclaimed they would have nothing to do with one who came in the devil's house! and no intreaties could prevail on them to approach me. I at last owed my deliverance to the spirit and generosity of a female; a young woman took hold of a cord which I had thrown out, and calling to the men, they yielded that assistance to her request, which they had refused to mine. A crowd of people from the neighbourhood assembled, who very willingly assisted me to disembark."

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1785. Meeting of parliament.

PARLIAMENT met on the 26th of January 1785, and the chief object recommended by his majesty to the attention of the legislature, was the adjustment of such points in the commercial intercourse

course between Great Britain and Ireland, as had not before been arranged. The success attending measures which were embraced in the last session for the suppression of smuggling, would encourage them to persevere in their application to those important concerns; they would also consider the reports suggested by the commissioners of public accounts, and make such regulations as might appear necessary in the different offices of the kingdom. Notwithstanding the dissensions on the continent, his majesty continued to receive assurances from foreign powers of their amicable disposition towards this country. CHAP. XXXIV. 1785.

THE earl of Surrey opposed the address, or rather objected to it on account of what he conceived to be wrongly omitted; especially because no mention had been made of the reduction of the army. Lord North, conceiving parliamentary reform to be intended by one recommendatory expression, declared his sentiments very strongly against any alteration of the constitution; and Mr. Burke blamed the total silence relative to the affairs of India. Mr. Pitt replied to the objections; the observations on the reduction of the army were premature, until the supplies of the year should be before the house: parliamentary reform was a subject of the highest importance, but at this early period of the session it was impossible to state his plans specifically: all his ideas were not yet thoroughly matured; the subject comprehended a great variety of considerations, and related to essentials and vitals of the constitution; it therefore required considerate and delicate attention; and though it was a path which he was determined to tread, he knew with what tenderness and circumspection it became him to proceed. There was not a general debate, and the address was carried without a division.

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Consideration of the Westminster scrutiny.

THE scrutiny of the Westminster election was again brought before the house in the month of February. Mr. Fox had contended, that the election ought to be tried by Mr. Grenville's act, and had imputed the perseverance in the scrutiny to the persecuting spirit of the minister. Mr. Pitt argued, that Mr. Grenville's act was for trying elections virtually made, but that there being no return from Westminster, the law in question was not applicable: a scrutiny had been demanded by one of the candidates, the returning officer had complied, as official duty required; far from having any personal motives to promote a scrutiny, the very reverse was the case; it would have been more convenient and easy for ministers to have suffered Mr. Fox to take his seat without question, but instead of attending to their own accommodation, they had consulted the rights of the electors, and the purposes of substantial justice. The house continued in the same opinion as to the legality of the scrutiny; but finding in its progress that, though there were objectionable votes on both sides, a majority, nearly the same in proportion as at the close of the poll, remained in favour of Mr. Fox, they judged it expedient and equitable to direct the high bailiff to make a return; and the following day that officer returned lord Hood and Mr. Fox.

Debts of the nabob of Arcot.

ON the eighteenth of February the nabob of Arcot's debts to Europeans were the subject of parliamentary discussion. In Mr. Fox's India bill the new commissioners had been instructed to examine into the origin and justice of the claims; by Mr. Pitt's law the examination was appointed, but referred to the court of directors, who were to enjoin their presidencies and servants to enquire into the case, and in concert establish a fund from the nabob's revenue, for the discharge of the debts which should be found just, that they might be liquidated according

according to the respective rights of priority of the several creditors, and consistently with the rights of the company, and the honour and dignity of the nabob. Conformably to this clause, the directors had prepared orders; but after inspection, the board of control rejected them, and gave new instructions, which admitted the greater part of the debts to be just, assigned a fund from the revenues of the Carnatic for their discharge, and established the priority of payment among the several classes of creditors: these directions had been publicly read at a meeting of such creditors as were in England. Motions were made in both houses, that copies of the letters or injunctions issued by the court of directors might be produced; the object of this requisition was to prove, that the board of control, in *originating* the contrary order, had departed from the express purpose of their institution, and had violated the act of parliament. Mr. Fox having opened this subject in the house of commons, and assuming the position that was to be proved, expatiated with copious eloquence on the arbitrary power which was usurped by the board of control, and the mischievous consequences that the present act must produce to the interests of the Carnatic, and of the India company. Mr. Dundas argued from the act of parliament, that the power exercised was not an usurpation, since, by the strict letter of the statute, the board was enabled to originate orders in cases of urgent necessity, and to direct their transmission to India. In the present exercise of that power, the board of control had acted upon the most complete information that could be received, and had directed the arrangement in question, on finding it the most fair and just to all the parties concerned. It was expedient not to keep the nabob's debts longer afloat; the final conclusion of the business would tend to promote tranquillity and harmony, and the debtor had concurred with the creditors in establishing the validity

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of the claims. After these general observations, he, by a particular detail of their respective circumstances, undertook to justify the several debts which were admitted by the board.

Mr. Burke's speech on the subject.

On this subject Mr. Burke made a very long oration, which displayed a most extensive knowledge of the history and state of India; but it was much more remarkable for narratives, imagery, and philosophy, to inform, delight, and instruct a reader in his closet, than for appropriate arguments to the point at issue, to convince a hearer in the senate, and induce him to vote as the speaker desired. The part of his reasoning that appeared specifically applicable to the subject before the house was adduced to demonstrate that the alleged debts arose from a collusion between the nabob and certain servants of the company, who had been guilty of the most heinous fraud, oppression, and cruelty: forcibly animated and highly coloured was the picture he drew, of tyranny and suffering, guilt and misery, in British India, as the result of the alleged connivance; but since, as a chain of logical deduction, the evidence did not make out the case, the motion was negatived; and in the house of peers a similar proposition was rejected.

On the eighteenth of April, Mr. Pitt again introduced his propositions for a reform in parliament. Desirous, as the minister professed himself, of such a change in the representation as he conceived most consistent with the principles, and conducive to the objects of the constitution, he was aware of the danger of essays of reform; unless very nicely modified and circumscribed. The general characteristics of his plan for that purpose, were caution and specification: nothing vague or indefinite was proposed; no chasm was left which visionary imaginations might fill with their own distempered fancies: *thus far shalt thou go and no farther*, was obviously expressed in the extent and bounds. The leading

Mr. Pitt's plan of parliamentary reform,

principle

principle was, that the choice of legislators should follow such circumstances as give an interest in their acts, and therefore ought in a great degree to be attached to property. This principle being established, it was obvious, that as many very considerable towns and bodies either had no vote in electing representatives, or had not the privilege of chusing a number proportioned to their property, it would be necessary to disfranchise certain decayed boroughs. In relations between government and subject it was a manifest rule in jurisprudence on the one hand, that the interest of a part must give way to the interest of the whole; but on the other, that when such a sacrifice is required from a subject, the state should amply compensate individual loss incurred for the public good. Guided by these maxims of ethics, Mr. Pitt proposed to transfer the right of chusing representatives from thirty-six of such boroughs as had already fallen, or were falling into decay, to the counties, and to such chief towns and cities as were at present unrepresented; that a fund should be provided for the purpose of giving to the owners and holders of the boroughs disfranchised, an appreciated compensation; that the acceptance of this recompence should be a voluntary act of the proprietor, and, if not taken at present, should be placed out at compound interest, until it became an irresistible bait to such proprietor: he also projected to extend the right of voting for knights of the shire to copyholders as well as freeholders. The chief arguments in favour of a reform were derived from the alleged partiality of representation; an active, reforming, and regulating policy, which kept pace with the alterations in the country, was requisite to preserve the constitution in its full vigour: when any part of our system was decayed, it had ever been the wisdom of the legislature to renovate and restore it by such means as were most likely to answer the end proposed;

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is introduced into parliament.

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and hence had arisen the frequent alterations that had taken place with respect to the rule of representation. From a change of circumstances, towns which once ought to have a vote in chusing a senator or senators, now behoved to have none; and towns once without any just claim to the right of such an election, were now aggrieved and injured by the want of that privilege. The principle continued the same in both the former and the latter, but its application should be altered in a difference of case. The opposers of reform, on the other hand, contended, that no necessity had been shewn for such a change; that whatever inequalities theory might exhibit in the existing system, the people were all actually represented, as far as was necessary to their rights and happiness; that no man could be deprived of liberty, property, or life, but by his own act, whether he had a vote for a member of parliament or not; that under the present mode of representation, both individual and national prosperity had risen to a very great pitch, and was rapidly rising to a higher; that it was extremely dangerous to alter what experience, the only sure test of political truth, had uniformly shewn to be good.[h] The people did not want reform; the large

[h] Never, perhaps, were the arguments on this side of the question more clearly exhibited, than those which are compressed into a page of one of the most valuable works that can be recorded in the literary history of the present reign. Paley, in his Principles of moral and political Philosophy, resting the question concerning representation, as well as every political establishment, solely on expediency, says, "We consider it (representation) so far only as a right at all, as it conduces to public utility: that is, as it contributes to the establishment of good laws; or as it secures to the people the just administration of these laws. These effects depend upon the disposition and abilities of the national counsellors: wherefore, if men the most likely, by their qualifications, to know and to promote the public interest, be actually returned to parliament, it signifies little who return them. *If the properest persons be elected, what matters it by whom* they are elected? At least no prudent statesman would subvert long established or even settled rules of representation, without a prospect of procuring wiser or better representatives. This then being well observed, let us, before we seek to obtain any thing more, consider duly what we already have. We have a house of commons composed of five hundred and forty-eight members, in which number are found the most considerable land-holders and merchants of the kingdom, the heads of the army, the navy, and the laws; the occupiers of great offices in the state, together with many private individuals, eminent

large towns that were said to be aggrieved by the present state of representation had made no complaint, or sought any redress; those which were called rotten and decayed boroughs were frequently represented by gentlemen who had the greatest stake in the country, and consequently were as much concerned in its welfare as any other representatives. Mr. Pitt's propositions were negatived by a majority of two hundred and forty-eight to one hundred and seventy-four. . . .

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and negatived by a great majority.

PARLIAMENT was this year principally occupied by forming arrangements for a commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland.

State of Ireland.

WE have seen that, in the year 1780, the trade of Ireland had been freed from the hurtful restrictions by which it had long been shackled. In 1782, the independence of Irish parliament had been for ever established. It remained for the legislature of the two countries to arrange a system of commercial intercourse, which might best promote the advantage of the two parties so nearly connected. The freedom of trade had afforded to Ireland the means of improvement; of which the success must depend on the active, well-directed, and persevering industry of the inhabitants; as without those exertions, the mere exemption from former restriction could be of little avail: no effectual measures had hitherto been employed for exciting and cherishing so beneficial a spirit: the manufacturers had for some years been much engaged in political speculations, which, by abstracting their attention from their own business, naturally caused great distress;

nent by their knowledge, eloquence, or activity. Now, if the country be not safe in such hands, in whose may it confide its interest? If such a number of such men be liable to the influence of corrupt motives, what assembly of men will be secure from the same danger? Does any new scheme of representation promise to collect together more wisdom or produce firmer integrity? In this view of the subject, and attending not to ideas of order and proportion (of which many minds are much enamoured), but to known effects alone, we may discover just excuses for those parts of the present representation which appear to a hasty observer most exceptionable and absurd." Paley, vol. ii. p. 219.

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and that distress, discontent and violence. Various expedients were attempted for their relief. In 1784, Mr. Gardener brought forward a plan for protecting their own manufactures, and enforcing the consumption of them at home, by laying heavier duties on similar manufactures imported from other countries; he had therefore moved to restrict the importation of English drapery, by subjecting it to a duty of 2*s.* 6*d.* per yard. It was objected to this motion, that Great Britain would probably retaliate, and that Ireland might endanger the loss of the linen trade, the annual value of which was a million and a half, for the uncertain prospect of increasing the woollen, that did not exceed 50,000*l.* A proposition of such obvious impolicy was rejected by the great majority of one hundred to thirty-six. The populace having been ardently desirous that the bill should pass, were inflamed with the greatest rage at its rejection, and gave loose to excessive outrage. They entered into compacts not to consume imported goods, and inflicted the most severe punishment on those who either did not subscribe or adhere to such agreements; the riotous outrages of the mob rendered the interference of military force necessary, and though the soldiers behaved with all possible moderation, still in the tumults disagreeable violence took place, and Dublin was a scene of dissension. In such a situation, regard to temporary tranquillity, as well as to general, commercial, and political interest, rendered it necessary to devise some tie, that, by connecting the interests, might combine the inclinations of both countries.

Propositions of Mr. Pitt to settle trade on the basis of mutual reciprocity.

Mr. Pitt seeing so strong special reasons, and urging immediately what the general consideration required to be speedily effected, took measures for a commercial treaty with Ireland. Commissioners appointed on the part of the sister kingdom concerted with the British cabinet a plan for regulating and finally adjusting the commercial intercourse. The

result Mr. Orde stated to the Irish parliament on the 11th of February, and moved a corresponding set of resolutions, which passed the house of commons with little alteration. The concurrence of the house of peers being soon after obtained, the resolutions, ten in number, were immediately transmitted to England, as, on their part, the proposed basis for an equitable and final adjustment. Mr. Pitt having received these assurances of the disposition of the body of the Irish parliament to settle their commercial intercourse on the basis of reciprocity, moved a resolution to the following effect: "That it is highly important to the general interests of the empire that the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland should be finally adjusted, and that Ireland should be permitted to have a permanent and irrevocable participation of the commercial advantages of this country, when her parliament shall permanently and irrevocably secure an aid out of the surplus of the hereditary revenue of that kingdom, towards defraying the expence of protecting the general commerce of the empire in time of peace." After reviewing what had been already granted to Ireland by the British parliament, he generalized his object; which was to settle commercial intercourse on the firm basis of mutual reciprocity. In applying this principle, he exhibited an extensive knowledge of the relative and absolute state of manufactures, and other materials of commerce, in both countries, and proposed a plan, under two general heads: First, Britain was to allow the importation of the produce of our colonies in the West Indies and America into Ireland: secondly, There should be established between the two countries a mutual exchange of their respective productions and manufactures upon equal terms. The first, he allowed, had the appearance of militating against the navigation laws, for which England ever entertained

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Resolutions for that purpose.

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entertained the greatest partiality; but as she already allowed Ireland to trade directly with the colonies, the importation of the produce of those settlements circuitously through Ireland into Britain could not injure the colonial trade of this country. Such was the general outline of the proposed system on its first appearance. A considerable portion of the session was employed in examining merchants and manufacturers upon the various details which could elucidate the subject; and after fully investigating the evidence of the traders, Mr. Pitt, on the 12th of May, proposed twenty resolutions, containing a full explanation of the terms before proposed, and also new resolutions, which arose from the increased knowledge that had been acquired. The chief objects of the additional propositions were to provide, First, That whatever navigation laws the British parliament should hereafter find it necessary to enact for the preservation of her marine, the same should be passed by the legislature of Ireland. Secondly, Against the importation of any West India merchandizes, that were not the produce of our own colonies, into Ireland, and from thence into Britain. Thirdly, That Ireland should debar itself from trading to any of the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan, so long as it should be thought necessary to continue the charter of the English East India company.

Additional propositions.

The propositions underwent severe animadversion against the whole system: it was argued, that the manufactures and commerce of Great Britain would be very materially injured by the establishment of the proposed regulations; the former, from the comparatively small price of labour in Ireland, which alone, it was contended, would soon enable that kingdom to undersell us at home and abroad; the latter, from the facility with which

it

it was well known the revenue laws in Ireland were evaded. The plan was strongly deprecated by British manufacturers, and many urgent petitions were presented, praying it might not be adopted. The chief objections were made to the fourth proposition, by which it was intended, "That all laws made or to be made in Britain for securing exclusive privileges to the ships and mariners of Britain, Ireland, and the British colonies and plantations, and for regulating and restraining the colonial trade, should be enforced by Ireland, by laws to be passed by the parliament of that kingdom, for the same time and in the same manner as in Britain." The adversaries of the system asserted, that this part of the plan was a resumption of the right of legislation for Ireland, which Britain had renounced, and a proffer of commercial advantage to Ireland in exchange for her lately acquired independence: they further contended against the propositions in general, that in whatever proportion the one country should benefit from them, in the very same the other would lose. The supporters of the measure argued, that it was absolutely necessary, in order to remove the discontents which at present raged in Ireland; and that unless the propositions were passed into a law, all the recent grants would prove useless, as they were evidently inadequate to the expectations of the sister kingdom. The fourth proposition was a clause which the safety of our own navigation laws made it necessary to annex to the benefits allowed to Ireland. It was not the intention of the British parliament to interfere with the independence of Ireland; all that was proposed, was a proffer of advantage from one independent state to another, on a condition subject to which that other had the alternative of either accepting or rejecting the whole plan. The notion, that, in a commercial treaty between two nations, if the one gained, the other must proportionably

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portionably lose, was totally unfounded; trade between two states might be, and often was, the reciprocal exchange of surplus for supply, as between individuals; and thus both parties might be very great gainers. The relative situation of Britain and Ireland, their respective commodities and habits, were such as to afford a moral certainty of the highest benefits to both countries, from the increased productiveness of labour through the reciprocation of speedy markets. After three months had been chiefly occupied in examining witnesses, and modifying the various provisions, the propositions were passed by a large majority in the house of commons, and afterwards by the lords. On the 28th of July Mr. Pitt proposed a bill founded upon them; this was accompanied by an address to the king, in which both houses concurred, containing a statement of what had been done by the British parliament, and observing that it now remained for the parliament of Ireland to judge and decide upon the proposed agreement.

After considerable modification, they are passed into a law.

Sent over to the Irish parliament.

In Ireland national prejudice counteracted national interest. During the progress of the discussion in England, the people in the neighbouring island had expressed great dissatisfaction, which had increased, as their orators expatiated on the propositions that had been chiefly opposed in the British parliament. Mr. Flood and Mr. Grattan peculiarly distinguished themselves by the eloquent harangues which stirred their countrymen to rage and indignation against Britain. Declaiming with glowing ardour against the whole system, they directed their invectives particularly to the fourth proposition, and to the ninth, which, restraining the Irish from trading to India, merely prevented them from infringing the chartered rights of the India company, and thus placed them exactly on the same footing with every British subject who was not a member of that corporation. The sentiments of the people

Messrs. Flood and Grattan oppose the propositions.

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people so impressed, influenced a considerable number of the house of commons; so that when a corresponding bill was introduced, the majority in its favour was but small. The clamour against it was very loud, and petitions were very numerous. In these circumstances, it was deemed by the British legislature inexpedient to proceed any further, with overtures so misunderstood and misrepresented by the party to whom they were really so advantageous. From close connexion, Mr. Pitt had seen that very great advantages must accrue to both countries; commercial intercourse would, in addition to appropriate advantage, gradually tend to assimilation of character, and speedily produce reciprocity of interest; the result of both would be political harmony. If his propositions had been adopted, it is morally certain, that the bond of amity would have been drawn so close as to have prevented subsequent events so calamitous to Ireland.

Their eloquence stirs their countrymen to rage and indignation.

They are abandoned by the British government.

Their real merit.

Introductory to financial details, Mr. Pitt this season took a general view of the state of pecuniary affairs, by comparing the public income with the public expenditure. The result of his statement and calculations was, that there would be such a surplus as would enable parliament to appropriate one million sterling to a sinking fund for the discharge of the national debt. At present, however, he had only seen the general practicability of the principle, but not having matured measures for such an appropriation, he chose to defer a specific plan till the following year. There remained unfunded upwards of ten millions of navy bills, and ordnance debentures: these were funded in the five per cents, taken at about ninety pounds, and a million was borrowed from the bank at five per cent. to supply deficiencies still remaining from the expences of the war. The new taxes were, an additional duty on male servants; a duty on female servants, increasing in a stated proportion according to the number, with

Mr. Pitt's statements of finance, and intimation of a plan for paying the national debt.

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with a farther charge to bachelors having such servants; a tax on attornies, on post-horses, on carriages, coach-makers, pawn-brokers, gloves, and retail shops; besides one hundred and fifty thousand pounds raised by a lottery. On the 8th of August, on a message from the king, parliament was adjourned to the 27th of October, and afterwards prorogued by proclamation.

The session rises.

Affairs of Europe.

THE emperor and the Dutch still persevered in the contest about the Scheldt, but commotions in Germany unexpectedly arising, prevented him from bearing down upon Holland with his whole force. Joseph was become sensible, not only that other powers would not suffer him to open the Scheldt, but that his present possessions in the Netherlands were precarious; and finding one project likely to misgive, in the true spirit of an adventurer, resolved to try another, by making an exchange with the elector of Bavaria, which should put the emperor in possession of the duchy of Bavaria, with all the appendages confirmed at the peace of Teschen, and make the elector sovereign of the Austrian Netherlands, which, more to render the proposal palatable, was to be erected into a kingdom. This scheme would have been very advantageous to Austria, by the accession of a large and productive country, which, surrounding and completing the Austrian dominions, would have consolidated and compacted so great a body of power as would over-balance the other states of Germany. A man of deep reflection, in the very important advantages of the object, would have discovered an unsurmountable obstacle to its attainment; that the king of Prussia and other members of the Germanic body would not suffer the establishment of a power that must overbear themselves; profound sagacity, however, was no part of Joseph's character. Ambitious in design, but fantastic in project and light in counsel, he very superficially investigated circumstances, and imperfectly

Designs of the emperor upon Bavaria.

calculated

calculated the probabilities of success. As soon as he had formed his scheme, he communicated it to the court of Petersburgh. Catharine, who perfectly comprehended the character of the emperor, studiously cultivated amity with a prince whom she could render so powerful a co-adjutor to herself. She most readily acceded to hasty and ill-digested schemes for gratifying his ambition, that thereby she might prevent his obstruction, and secure his co-operation to the mature and well-digested plans she had formed for extending her power and dominions; she also joined him in making overtures to the house of Bavaria, but these were peremptorily and indignantly rejected. The king of Prussia being informed of the proposal, made very strong remonstrances; and having concerted with the two chief powers of Northern Germany, the electors of Saxony and Hanover, he effected a confederation for maintaining the indivisibility of the empire. The court of Vienna did every thing in its power to stop the progress of the combination, but it was joined by most of the other states, and France was known to be favourable to its object. Besides the insuperable impediments to the projects of Joseph from the well founded jealousy of foreign powers, great intestine commotions prevailed in his own dominions; his numberless innovations in the civil and religious establishments of Hungary and its appendages, had the usual effect of schemes of reform founded on abstract principles, without regard to the character, sentiments, and habits of the people, and produced much greater evils than those which they professed to remedy; by violating customs, offending prejudices, annulling prescriptions, and trenching on privileges, he drove his subjects to dissatisfaction, insurrection, and rebellion: to quell the revolters required powerful and expensive efforts, nor were they finally reduced till the close of the campaign: these various causes prevented hostilities from being commenced

Supported by Russia.

Opposed by Prussia and Hanover.

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commenced against the states-general. Pacific overtures were resumed under the mediation of the court of France, and the management of the count de Vergennes, the French prime minister: the Dutch agreed to pay Joseph a certain sum of money in lieu of his claims over Maestricht, which he renounced for ever, and also resigned his pretensions to the free navigation of the Scheldt: less material disputes were compromised and adjusted, and a treaty of peace was concluded between Austria and Holland. Before the expiration of the year, the Dutch and France entered into a new alliance, offensive and defensive. France was internally occupied in schemes of diminution of the immense debts which she had contracted in the late war, and in the improvement of her manufactures and commerce. A merchant, raised to be prime minister, contributed to the speedy elevation of the mercantile profession in the opinion of Frenchmen; and trade, which before had been considered as derogatory to the character of a gentleman, was now highly respected. Numberless treatises in favour of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, flowed from the fertile ingenuity of their writers, which, if they did not much inform or convince acute and distinguishing understandings, by striking ductile imaginations, influenced a much more numerous class. The lively fancies, ardent feelings, and impetuous spirits of Frenchmen were now turned to mercantile adventure: they conceived themselves happily emancipated from the old prejudices which had kept many of their forefathers in proud poverty. On other subjects also, they fancied they had dispelled the clouds of ignorance, and were enlightened by the sunshine of reason. There was at this time a great multiplicity of ingenious writers in France, without that patient investigation, research, cautious consideration, and experimental reasoning, which only can lead to just, sound, and beneficial philosophy;

Abandons the navigation of the Scheldt, and concludes peace with Holland.

Treaty between France and Holland.

Internal state of France.

Multiplicity of ingenious writers.

phy; to religious, moral, and political wisdom. A few eminent framers of hypotheses had given the tone to the rest; Helvetius, Rousseau, and Voltaire, taught infidelity to numerous classes of disciples, who admitted their doctrines upon the faith of their asseverations. Their multiplying votaries, professing to disregard all superstitious bigotry, were still Roman catholics in reasoning: they admitted *an infallible authority*, if not in the pope, in Jean Jacques; decrees from the mountains of Switzerland were received with no less veneration, than bulls had formerly been received from the Vatican; infidelity was become the prominent feature of the French character, and occupied the principal share of conversation in fashionable societies. The royal family, indeed, were not tinctured with the prevalent impiety, but the indulgent liberality of the monarch did not watch and rigorously check such opinions with the vigilance which sound policy required, and neither he nor his ministers appeared to be aware of the dangers attending the diffusion of irreligion through a nation.

Doctrines of Voltaire and Rousseau implicitly received.

Prevalence of infidelity.

British commerce continued to increase and extend; the flourishing state of trade, together with the announced project of Mr. Pitt for the discharge of the national debt, raised the stocks in a short time from fifty-four to seventy, in the three per cents. consolidated, the barometer of the other funds. The mercantile and monied interest, in its various departments and corporations, evidently reposed in the chancellor of the exchequer a confidence which they had bestowed upon no minister since the time of his father. They conceived the highest opinion of his integrity and talents, approved the principles on which he was proceeding, and the regulations he had actually proposed, and were thoroughly satisfied with the rapid advances of trade, as well as the increasing means of enlarging their capitals. While ministers impressed the public with

Great and increasing prosperity of Britain.

Confidence of the monied interest in the talents and integrity of Mr. Pitt.

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with a favourable idea of their qualifications to promote the prosperity of the country, the supporters of opposition were foremost in their efforts to amuse and entertain; wit and temporary satire appeared with brilliancy and force in the Rolliad, a mock heroic poem, of which the professed hero was a respectable and worthy gentleman, Mr. Rolle of Devonshire, a zealous friend of administration, and therefore held up by their opponents to ridicule. The notes on the poem display considerable humour, and illustrate the feelings, sentiments, and opinions of opposition, concerning the general politics of the times. The death of Mr. Warton, the poet laureat, also afforded an occasion to ingenuity for exhibiting a sarcastic account of ministerial characters in the *birth-day odes*; performances satirically inscribed with the names of various gentlemen and noblemen as candidates for the vacant office, and, as in characteristic compositions, presenting specimens of their poetical powers by odes on the king's birth-day. The respective essays painted the alleged foibles of the chief supporters of the cabinet: viewed together, the Rolliad and the birth-day odes presented ministerial men and measures in the light in which the satirists of opposition at this period wished them to be beheld, and are not therefore unconnected with the serious literature and politics of the anti-ministerial party.

Satirical literature.

Question of literary property.

A CAUSE affecting literary property was this year determined by the court of session, the chief civil tribunal of Scotland. The compilers of the Scottish Encyclopedia had inserted in that work large extracts from Dr. Gilbert Stewart's history of Scotland, and his history of the reformation of Scotland: Mr. Stewart prosecuted them for piracy, and the transcripts being long and continuous, the court, having a power of determining equitably as well as legally, gave sentence in favour of the prosecutor, on the ground that the defenders had quoted more,

and with less interruption, than was allowed by the rules of literary property. The principle of the judgment appeared to be, that large and connected passages copied from a literary work, tend to injure the sale of that work, and consequently lessen the value of the property to the rightful owner.

Return of Mr. Hastings, a great subject of temporary literature.

PEACE having been now completely established between the East India company and Tippoo Saib, tranquillity was diffused over British India. During the recess, Mr. Hastings, the governor-general, returned; and the periodical writings of the times teemed with attacks and vindications of his character.

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Meeting of parliament.—King's speech.—Views of Mr. Fox concerning continental alliances.—The duke of Richmond's scheme for fortifying the dock-yards—submitted to parliament—Arguments for and against.—Speech of Mr. Sheridan on the fortifications—The bill is rejected by the casting vote of the speaker.—Alteration in the mutiny bill.—Mr. Pitt's plan for appropriating an annual million to the payment of the national debt.—Mr. Sheridan takes the most active part in controverting the minister's financial propositions.—Farther measures of the minister for preventing frauds against the revenue.—Proposes to subject foreign wines to the excise.—A bill for the purpose is passed into a law.—Bill appointing commissioners to examine the crown lands.—The conduct of Mr. Hastings becomes a subject of enquiry.—Public opinion concerning Mr. Hastings.—Mr. Burke opens the subject.—His introductory speech.—Proposes to proceed by impeachment.—Presents a summary of the alleged criminal acts.—A majority, including Mr. Pitt, finds ground of impeachment in the proceedings against Cheyht Sing.—Mr. Dundas's bill for improving the government of British India.—Supplies.—Session terminates.

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1786. Meeting of parliament, and the king's speech.

ON the 24th of January 1786, parliament was assembled. The speech from the throne mentioned the amicable conclusion of the disputes which had threatened the tranquillity of Europe, and the friendly dispositions of foreign powers towards this country: it expressed the royal satisfaction, that his majesty's subjects now experienced the growing blessings of peace in the extension of trade, improvement of revenue, and increase of public credit. For the farther advancement of those important objects, the king relied on the continuance of that zeal and industry which was manifested in the last session of parliament. The resolutions which they had laid before him, as the basis

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of an adjustment of the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland, had been by his direction recommended to the parliament of that kingdom, but no effectual step had hitherto been taken, which could enable them to make any farther progress in that salutary work. His majesty recommended to the house of commons the establishment of a fixed plan for the reduction of the national debt; a measure which, he trusted, the flourishing state of the revenue would be sufficient to effect, with little addition to the public burdens.

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THE objects proposed by the sovereign for parliamentary deliberation, were evidently of such primary importance, that the speech and corresponding address afforded little opportunity for animadversion from opposition. Without objecting to the address, Mr. Fox expatiated into a very wide field of continental politics. He went over the state and recent transactions of Russia, Germany, Holland, and France, and endeavoured to prove, that the accession of the king, as elector of Hanover, to the Germanic confederation, would disgust the emperor with this country, and indispose him to an alliance with Britain in any future war. Viewing the interests and relations of the various states of the continent, he deduced from them the principles of alliance which he judged most expedient for this country to adopt. From the connexion between France and Spain, the emperor was the only power whose co-operation could occupy the exertions of France by land, and thereby prevent her from directing to maritime contests such efforts as she had employed in the recent war. An intercourse both commercial and political with Russia, was also an object of the highest consequence to this country; a favourable opportunity had been lost, but still an advantageous alliance might be concluded. He understood that a treaty was on the point of being established between Britain and France; and he strongly reprobated the

Views of Mr. Fox concerning continental alliances.

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policy of such a measure, appealing to the experience of former times, which (he said) proved that this nation had become powerful and flourishing, from the moment that she quitted all commercial connexion with France. With strictures on the Irish propositions and the India bill, he concluded a speech, which, as usual with opposition on the first day of the session, exhibited a statement of all the alleged errors and miscarriages of ministers. In replying, Mr. Pitt made an introductory observation, deserving peculiar attention, as it very strongly exhibited a prominent feature in the eloquence of his opponent. "Mr. Fox (he said) discovered most extraordinary dexterity in leaving out of a discussion* such parts belonging to the subject as did not suit his purpose to be brought forward, and a similar dexterity of introducing, however foreign to the question, such matter as he expected would be favourable." By reverting to the course of Mr. Fox's oratory during the administration of lord North, the reader will perceive this remark of the minister not to be groundless. Mr. Fox had often allowed himself unbounded liberty of expatiation, and roamed at large in the wide regions of invective. Lord North had most frequently followed his adversary through the devious tracts, and much time was spent by both orators in contentions on subjects which were foreign to the immediate business of the house. Forcible as Mr. Fox was in argument; dexterous, skilful, and ingenious, as lord North was in eluding a strength which he could not meet; the reasoning of both wanted closeness, and compacted arrangement: besides, as of two very able combatants Mr. Fox was incomparably the superior, lord North in his tactics naturally imitated, in order to parry his assailant. Mr. Pitt was of a different cast and character; he was far from

* See Parliamentary Reports for 1786, Jan. 24.

being

being under the necessity of shifting blows that he could repel by equal force, and return with well-directed effort. Disciplined in reflection and argumentation, as well as powerful in talents, he thoroughly knew his own ground, and his ability to maintain it in any mode which he judged expedient; he was not therefore to be hurried away by the evolutions of his adversary. Mr. Pitt at this time declared an intention, to which in the course of his parliamentary warfare he generally adhered, that let Mr. Fox range ever so wide into extraneous subjects, he should confine his answers to what he conceived relative to the purpose. In the present debate, he observed, various topics had been discussed by Mr. Fox, such as the politics of the emperor and the German confederacy, which were not within the control of the house: the treaty with Russia was in considerable forwardness, but neither that proposition nor the negociation with France were yet proper to be discussed; objections were therefore premature, and only hypothetical, concerning a subject so imperfectly known. Fox replied, by placing his former observations in a new light, without any fresh argument; and no general debate having ensued, the address was carried without a division.

Duke of Richmond's scheme for fortifying the dock-yards.

THE first important object that occupied the deliberations of parliament, was a measure which originated with the duke of Richmond, master-general of the ordnance. Intelligent and ardent, this nobleman had paid peculiar attention to mathematics, as a ground-work of military skill, especially gunnery and fortification, and desired to rest a great portion of the national defence against the approaches of an enemy, on the abilities and exertions of an engineer. In these sentiments he was confirmed by his conception of recent events. The late war had seen the Bourbon armadas hovering on our coasts: accident only (he thought) secured us

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from the danger with which we were menaced; our country might have been attacked, our docks and harbours destroyed. Under this impression the duke, from the time he became master of the ordnance, had been uniformly eager for adding to our defences a plan of fortification, and, as we have seen, had inculcated this doctrine upon ministers. In the former session, a scheme of his grace for fortifying the dock-yards of Portsmouth and Plymouth was incidentally mentioned in the house of commons, without being introduced in a regular motion: the house expressed an unwillingness to apply the public money to the execution of such a scheme, until acquainted with the opinions of persons most competent to decide on the wisdom and utility of such a measure. That the desired information might be obtained, his majesty appointed a board of military and naval officers to take the project under consideration, and to meet for that purpose at Portsmouth with the duke of Richmond as their president. The instructions issued to this council propounded six hypothetical positions as themes for discussion, and annexed heads and questions for directing the application of the assumptions to the objects of enquiry.[b] The hypothesis on which the proposition was grounded was, that the fleet should be absent, or for some other cause prevented from affording its protection to the dock-yards. In the first and second problems, this case was assumed and submitted to the council: the unanimous answer was, that if the dock-yards were not defended by the fleet, fortifications would be necessary.[c] The four subsequent heads of consultation were grounded upon this basis; and presupposing the absence of the fleet, examined the probable force with which an enemy might invade Britain during such ab-

[b] See instructions transmitted to the board of officers, dated April 15th, 1785, with extracts from the reports of the board, as laid before the house of commons on the 27th of February, 1786.

[c] See opinion of officers on the first and second data.

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sence of our navy, the troops that might be expected to be ready, the time in which the strength of the country could be collected, and the insufficiency of the present works to hold out until an army were assembled to oppose the invaders. Concerning these subordinate questions, there was considerable diversity of opinion; the greater number, however, delivered a report, which approved the scheme of fortification as requisite for the supposed emergency, but gave no opinion on the probability that such a crisis would arise. Lord Percy and general Burgoyne, with several naval officers, went beyond the given case, and represented the hypothetical event as so extremely unlikely to happen, that it was neither wise nor expedient to provide against it by the expensive system which was proposed. Admirals Milbanke and Graves, captains Macbride, Hotham, Jarvis, and some others, explicitly affirmed the fortifications to be totally unnecessary. The opinion of the majority of land-officers did not amount to an approbation of the scheme, as actually right to be executed in the present state of the country; but was merely an assent to the alleged necessity of fortifying the docks, if the country afforded no other means of defence, and no more than an admission of a conditional proposition as true, in the circumstances which its author supposed. So bounded an acquiescence was construed by the duke of Richmond to authorise the immediate adoption of his plan; to which the cabinet ministers acceding, a board of engineers was directed to make an estimate of the expence, and the requisite sum, as stated by these gentlemen, amounted to 760,097*l.* After preparatory motions for the production of papers, *Mr.* Pitt, on the 27th of February, introduced the plan in the following general resolution: "It appears to this house, that to provide effectually for securing his majesty's dock-yards at Portsmouth and Plymouth by

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Is submitted to parliament.

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by a permanent system of fortification, founded on the most economical principles, and requiring the smallest number of troops possible to answer the purpose of such security, is an essential object for the safety of the state, intimately connected with the general defence of the kingdom, and necessary for enabling the fleet to act with full vigour and effect for the protection of commerce, the support of our distant possessions, and the prosecution of offensive operations in any war in which the nation may hereafter be engaged."

Arguments for it.

'THE favourers of the measure founded their arguments on the report of the board of officers, which stated, that neither naval nor military force, nor even both united, could afford a security adequate to the importance of our dock-yards; fortifications were therefore absolutely necessary, in addition to both. They represented the duke of Richmond's scheme as the most eligible that could be adopted, since it was sufficient for the requisite defence, capable of being manned by the smallest force, demanded the least expence to erect, and afforded an increasing degree of security in the course of the construction. These works, moreover, would give greater scope to our fleets; because the dock-yards being thus protected, the navy would consequently be unfettered, and left at liberty to act as occasion might require, in whatever part of the world its presence might be necessary; and they would also reduce the standing army. Were an invasion threatened, and were we to trust only to our military force, there would be a necessity for augmenting to a most enormous degree that army on which the whole safety of the kingdom was to rest; but, if it were assisted with fortifications, a much smaller force would answer the purpose. An alarm had prevailed, that the measure was unconstitutional in its tendency, by laying a foundation for a standing army, and diverting into an useless

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and dangerous channel those resources which should strengthen our navy: far from rendering an increase of troops necessary, the proposed plan would actually tend to remove the necessity of keeping up so large a military establishment as otherwise must be maintained. CHAP. XXXV. 1786.

THESE arguments were by no means received without opposition and controversy; but the speaker who most peculiarly distinguished himself, was Mr. Sheridan, who was fast rising to very high oratorial fame and political importance. On the present question he exhibited the substance of all the reasoning that could be adduced against the scheme, and contended, that in itself and in its consequences the project was dangerous and unconstitutional; that the nature and circumstances of the report made by the board of officers did not warrant or authorise the system; fortifications would not reduce the standing army, or if they did, they would still be constituents of strength to the crown, even should it interfere with the rights and liberties of the people. The possible existence of this case was implied in the provisions of the bill of rights, and in the salutary and sacred reserve with which, for a short and limited period, we annually entrusted the executive magistrate with the necessary defence of the country. The orator first viewed the question on the general ground of constitutional jealousy, respecting the augmentation of military force. This sentiment, so natural to Britons, implied no suspicion personally injurious to the individual sovereign, or even his ministers; it merely considered kings and their counsellors as actuated by the same passions with other men: princes were fond of power; from the constitution of the army it must obey the executive ruler, therefore it ought to be circumscribed as much as was possibly consistent with the public safety. Soldiers were maintained for national defence and security, and were not

Arguments against it.

Mr. Sheridan's speech on the fortifications.

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not to be multiplied beyond the necessity in which only they could originate. The minister had endeavoured to anticipate this forcible objection to the new plan, by persuading the house that the fortifications would lessen, instead of enlarging the standing army; but his arguments on the subject could not stand the test of examination. If it was proper to fortify Portsmouth and Plymouth, the reasons which justified such a measure would apply to every other port in the kingdom, which might be of sufficient importance to require defence. The plan, as it now stood, proceeded upon two suppositions extremely improbable; the first was, That we should be so much inferior on our own seas, as to permit the enemy to land: secondly, That if they did invade Britain, they would chuse to attack the only places we had fortified. Might they not, on such a supposition, land between Plymouth and Portsmouth; or in Sussex, Kent, or the eastern coasts, and strike at the heart of the empire? If fortification was to be our defence, there must be a circle of fortresses round the coasts; the completion of such a project would require a military establishment, extensive beyond all former example. The safety of England rested on our navy, the courage and enterprise of our people, and not upon ramparts and intrenchments. The proposed fortifications would not be our safeguard against an invasion; but, though far from being beneficial, they might be efficacious: the garrisons requiring such an additional number of standing troops, in the hands of an ambitious prince or minister might be employed against the liberties of the people. The proposition was not only unconstitutional, unnecessary, and absurd, but unauthorised by the report of officers; mutilated as the statement was which had been submitted to the house, it did not contain grounds for justifying the scheme. The opinion of naval officers had been withheld, but the opinion

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of land officers was founded upon hypothetical and conditional suggestions, and upon such *data* as the master-general had proposed to them; for the truth or probability of which, the board invariably refused to make themselves responsible. In this part of his speech, Sheridan diversified his close and poignant reasoning by an interspersion of wit most happily appropriated to the subject. The report (he said) had been so artfully framed, that the board of officers appeared to have admitted the *data*; whereas they only assented to conclusions, which in their opinion would ensue on the assumption of the *data*. The master-general of the ordnance deserved the warmest panegyrics for the striking proofs which he had given of his genius as an engineer, which appeared even in planning and constructing the report in question; the professional ability of the master-general shone conspicuously there, as it would upon our coasts: he had made an argument of posts, and conducted his reasoning upon principles of trigonometry as well as logic. There were certain detached *data*, like advanced works, to keep the enemy at a distance from the main object in debate; strong provisions covered the flanks of his assertions; his very queries were in casemates; no impression therefore was to be made on this fortress of sophistry by desultory observations, and it was necessary to sit down before it, and assail it by regular approaches. It was fortunate, however, he said, to observe, that notwithstanding all the skill employed by the noble and literary engineer, his mode of defence on paper was open to the same objection which had been urged against his other fortifications, that, if his adversary got possession of one of his posts, it became strength against him, and the means of subduing the whole line of his argument. No supporter of the bill undertook to refute the arguments of Mr. Sheridan; many who usually voted

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voted with administration, were averse to the present measure; even Mr. Pitt was believed not to be very eager for its success, and the event was certainly different from the issue of most of his propositions; for when the question came to a division, the numbers were equal, and the casting vote of the speaker negatived the motion.

Soon after the defeat of a scheme which tended to increase military establishments, a bill was introduced for enlarging the authority of military courts, by subjecting to their jurisdiction officers who held commissions by brevet. This clause occasioned a strenuous opposition in both houses: the ground of disapprobation was the arbitrary nature of martial law, which was justified only by necessity, and therefore ought to be extended no farther than necessity required. Its object was to secure the discharge of duty on actual military service, therefore it ought not to operate out of that service. The supporters of the motion contended, that such officers might be invested with command, and therefore should be made subject to a court-martial in case of professional misbehaviour; there were also many other military officers who were not mustered, such as governors and lieutenant-governors, who might eventually exercise command, and ought therefore to become amenable to the laws which bind other soldiers: persons chusing to have the advantage of military rank, should hold it on the condition of complying with military rules; and if they disliked the terms, they might ease themselves of their grievance by resigning their commissions. On these grounds the clause was carried in both houses.

On the 29th of March, Mr. Pitt brought forward his plans[d] for the reduction of the national debt. A committee had been appointed early in the session,

[d] The minister is believed to have availed himself of the financial ability of Dr. Price, who so thoroughly understood political arithmetic.

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in order to investigate and exactly ascertain the public income and expenditure, and strike the balance: the result of the investigation from the income of the year 1785, was,

Plan of Mr. Pitt for reducing the national debt.

Income - -	£15,379,132
Expenditure -	14,478,181

So that a surplus of more than £900,000 remained; and on this basis Mr. Pitt formed his scheme. He proposed that, by taxes neither numerous nor burdensome, the balance might be raised to a million: by a succinct and clear view of our finances he demonstrated, that excess of income beyond expenditure was in the present and following years likely to increase; but in making his calculations, he had contented himself with concluding that it would not decrease. This million was to be appropriated unalienably to the gradual extinction of the national debt. Several savings of expence and increases of revenue, especially through the customs from the suppression of smuggling, would add to the national income: annuities would also fall into the same fund; the accumulated compound added to these sources would, in twenty-eight years, if properly managed, produce an annual revenue of four millions to the state. For the management of this fund, commissioners were to be appointed, to receive two hundred and fifty-thousand pounds quarterly, with the full power of employing it in the purchase of stock. In chusing persons to be entrusted, Mr. Pitt proceeded on his general principle, which had been already exhibited in his India bill; that in circumstances requiring new delegation of executorial power, the trust should be vested in men whose official situation presumed their competency to the execution of the commission; the speaker of the house of commons, the chancellor of the exchequer, the master of the rolls, the governor and deputy-governor of the bank of England, and accountant-

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accountant-general, were gentlemen whose nomination he recommended. After illustrating his calculations, and the advantages of his scheme, he compressed the substance into the following motion: "That the sum of one million be annually granted to certain commissioners, to be by them applied to the purchase of stock, towards discharging the public debt of this country; which money shall arise out of the surplusses, excesses, and overplus monies, composing the fund commonly called the sinking fund." The policy of contracting expenditure within income, in order to liquidate debt, was so obviously just, that no one dissented from the principle, but various objections were made to the scheme. These are reducible to two general heads: first, that the alleged excess did not exist: secondly, that admitting its existence, the proposed mode of application was not the best that might be adopted. On this subject, Mr. Sheridan took a leading part in opposition; he moved a series of resolutions, declaring there were not sufficient grounds to establish the existence of the asserted surplus; that the calculations were founded upon one year peculiarly favourable, and not upon such a number of succeeding years as could constitute a fair average; and that in the existing accounts even of that year, at least in the report of the committee, there were certain articles erroneously stated to the credit of income, and others erroneously assigned to the diminution of expenditure. He, however, neither proved the alleged errors, nor the impropriety of calculating from 1785, the first year to which any reasoning on the reduced expenditure, or growing revenue of a peace establishment and rising trade, could apply. The objections to the mode were principally adduced against the appropriation being unalienable in any circumstances: in times of war and pecuniary emergency, it might be expedient to have recourse to the present fund, instead

Mr. Sheridan takes the most active part in controverting the financial propositions of the minister.

instead of a loan. To modify this objection, Mr. Fox proposed, that in a future loan the commissioners might accept of as much of it as they could pay from the public money in their hands; and thus, besides a prevention of that amount of future debt which would be equivalent to the redemption of the past, the public would be gainers by the profits which would accrue from such a loan.[e] Mr. Pitt not only adopted, but highly applauded this clause: Mr. Pulteney proposed, that the commissioners should continue purchasing stock for the public when at or above par, unless otherwise directed by parliament. This provision, of which the object was to attach to parliament the responsibility of giving instructions to the commissioners, if necessary in the specified circumstances, was adopted. The bill containing the original principle and plan, though with some modification of the latter, passed through both houses, and received the royal assent.

Further measure of Mr. Pitt for preventing frauds against the revenue. He proposes to subject foreign wines to the excise.

MR. PITT had examined the frauds against the revenue with minuteness and fullness of enquiry. In no subject of impost, he found they were more prevalent than in wine: the present amount of the revenue resulting from that article, was less by two hundred and eighty thousand pounds, than in the middle of the last century, yet it was manifest that the consumption was greatly increased since that period: he attributed the defalcation, first, to the fraudulent importation of large quantities of foreign wine, without paying the duties: secondly, and principally, to the sale of a spurious liquor under the name of that beverage. To remedy this evil, he proposed a bill for subjecting foreign wines to the excise; by this means they could no longer fraudulently escape the payment of the revenue, as the excise, by its opportunities of more completely vigilant

[e] For instance, if there were a loan of six millions, of which the commissioners contracted for one million, and there was a *bonus* of two per cent. the public would gain 20,000*l*.

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inspection, could much more effectually prevent smuggling, if attempted; and there would not be the same motives to adulteration, when the substitute should have to pay the same duty as the genuine: the consequence would be, that the public would, without an additional price, procure better wine, and the revenue would be much greater, which would produce an increased demand for our manufactures, and thus the mass of productive industry would be augmented. For all these reasons, Mr. Pitt recommended the adoption of his plan. The arguments against it rested on two grounds: first general, on the impolicy and unconstitutional tendency of extending the excise laws; secondly special, on the inexpediency of the mode. These necessarily turned on topics often dicussed, the collection of the duty by inspecting and searching private houses, the summary proceedings against offenders. Under the second head it was contended, that the practice of gauging, so applicable to brewers, was perfectly incompatible with respect to such an article as wine; that continual increase and diminution of the trade stock, would baffle the endeavours of the officers to keep a regular account: as these objections did not apply more forcibly to wine than to liquors already subject to the excise, they made little impression; the bill passed through both houses, and received the royal assent.

A bill for the purpose is passed into a law.

Bill for appointing commissioners to examine the crown laws.

In consequence of a message from the king, Mr. Pitt, on the 20th of June, introduced a bill for appointing commissioners to inquire into the state and condition of the woods, forests, and land-revenues, belonging to the crown. Against this proposition it was contended, that the powers granted to the commissioners were contrary to the security of the subjects, whose rights, founded in prescription, would be invaded. It subjected all persons who held of the crown, or possessed estates adjoining to the crown lands, to an inquisition into their ancient boundaries and

and title-deeds, at the mere motion of the commissioners, without any other legal or ordinary process. It was supported on the ground of expediency, that it was proper and wise to ascertain the condition of these lands, in order to see of what improvements they were susceptible. In the commons, the bill encountered no material opposition; in the peers, lord Loughborough argued strongly against the proposition: he, and other lords entered a protest; but it passed by a majority of twenty-eight to eighteen. Mr. Marsham, proposed a bill for extending to persons employed by the navy and ordnance, the disqualifications contained in Mr. Crew's bill of 1782, for preventing revenue officers from voting at elections of members of parliament. The proposition was controverted by Mr. Pitt; the situation of persons intended by Mr. Crew, and of those now designed to be excluded, was totally different: the revenue officers were under the influence of government, but the persons employed in the departments in question, were subject to no control; they were at all times capable of procuring what was equal to their present salaries in foreign services, or from our merchants at home; the former were dependent upon the crown, the latter totally independent; no fair argument could therefore be adduced from the disfranchisement of the one set, for disqualifying the other: on these grounds the proposed bill was rejected.

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A DISCUSSION was now begun in the house of commons, which long occupied the attention of parliament and the public; this was the conduct of Warren Hastings esq. late governor-general of India. Early in the session, major John Scott, late confidential secretary to Mr. Hastings, and now a member of the house of commons, reminded Mr. Burke of his charges against the governor-general, said that he was now returned from India, and called on his accuser to bring forward the allegations of

The conduct of Mr. Hastings becomes a subject of enquiry.

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criminality, that they might undergo the enquiry and receive the decision of the house. Major Scott, was doubtless, warmly attached to Mr. Hastings, and perfectly confident of his innocence; nevertheless, the prudence of such a challenge is very questionable. Many warmly approved Mr. Hastings's character and administration, and conceived him the saviour of India from a native combination co-operating with the ambition of France; these admirers could not estimate him more highly than at present, though he were freed from charges which they thought altogether unfounded, while persons of a contrary opinion might not be convinced even by his acquittal. Mr. Scott undoubtedly knew, that however innocent his friend might really be, there was a great body of oral and written evidence in the reports of the committees, which tended to establish the opposite belief, or at any rate to leave the issue doubtful; the multiplicity and complexity of allegations would certainly render the process extremely tedious. From all these circumstances, an enquiry and trial must involve its subject in a labyrinth of difficulty, even were the ultimate event to be favourable. The zeal, therefore, which produced this defiance, was evidently imprudent; by rousing charges that might have lain dormant, it actually proved highly injurious to him whom it was intended to serve. Mr. Burke did not immediately answer major Scott's summons, but within a few days opened the discussion. On the 17th of February, he brought the subject before the house, and in an introductory speech traced the history of the proceedings of parliament respecting the affairs of British India, and also the alleged misconduct of the company's servants, from the period of lord Clive's government to the reports of the secret and select committees, the resolutions moved thereupon, and the approbation repeatedly given to these proceedings by his majesty from the throne. On the authority,

Mr. Burke opens the subject. His introductory speech.

rity, the sanction, and the encouragement thus afforded him, he rested his accusation of Mr. Hastings as a delinquent of the first magnitude. There were three species of inquisition against a state culprit: first, prosecution in the courts below, which, in the present case, he thought very inadequate to the complicated nature and extent of the offence, and the enormity of the offender: secondly, a bill of pains and penalties, of which he disapproved as a hardship and injustice to the accused, by obliging him to anticipate his defence; and by imposing on the house two relations that ought ever to be kept separate, those of accusers and of judges. The only process that remained, was by the ancient and constitutional mode of impeachment. The first step in such a cause, was a general review of the evidence, to enable them to determine whether the person charged should be impeached. If the general question was carried in the affirmative, they must next appoint a committee to divide and arrange the evidence, under the heads of which the impeachment should consist. He proposed, previously to a resolution of impeachment, that the evidence should be particularly investigated by a committee of the whole house, that they might be well acquainted with the grounds of procedure before they should attempt to proceed. He eloquently described the disagreeable nature of an accuser's office, and contended that it was not imposed on him by choice, but by necessity. He moved for the production of papers alleged to contain evidence relative to the subject, and endeavoured to shew that Mr. Dundas, who in 1782 had moved the recal of Mr. Hastings, ought to have taken a lead in the present business. Mr. Dundas acknowledged that he had recommended the recal of Mr. Hastings as politically expedient, but denied that his proposition expressed, or even implied, any judicial charge of criminal conduct, which consistency would require him to support;

He proposes to proceed by impeachment;

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if there was appearance of guilt, he agreed that it ought to be investigated, that if found to be real, adequate punishment might be inflicted. No objection was made to the production of the papers which were then specified; but Mr. Burke continuing at subsequent meetings to move for various other documents, Mr. Pitt, before he would agree to the requisition, proposed that the accuser should exhibit an abstract of the charges which he intended to adduce, that the house might judge whether the papers required or to be required, were relevant to the elucidation of the subject. Mr. Burke read a short outline of the charges, and pointed out the matters which the writings were intended to explain and substantiate. The charges were twenty-two in number: first, the Rohilla war: second, the detention of revenues of the province of Cola Alla Habad: third, the proceedings respecting Cheyt Sing: fourth, the conduct towards the princesses of Oude: fifth and sixth, the treatment of two rajahs: seventh, extravagant contracts made by Mr. Hastings in the name of the company: eighth, illegal presents: ninth, disregard of the orders of the East India company: tenth, eleventh, and twelfth, extravagant contracts on account of the company, and enormous salaries bestowed on officers of his own institution: thirteenth, ambassadors sent to Arcot and the Decan: fourteenth, the Mahratta treaty: fifteenth, the management of the revenues of Bengal: sixteenth, the ruin of the province of Oude: seventeenth, the dismissal of Mahomed Khan from the internal management of Bengal: eighteenth, treatment of the Mogul: nineteenth, a libel upon the directors: twentieth, the Mahratta war: twenty-first, the suppression of correspondence: twenty-second, the treatment of Fizullakham. Of these articles, by far the most distinguished were the third and fourth: Mr. Burke employed the remainder of February and the whole

and presents a summary of alleged criminal acts.

of March in moving for papers and preparing his accusations. On the 4th of April he charged Warren Hastings esquire, late governor-general of Bengal, with sundry high crimes and misdemeanors; nine of his articles he then delivered, and the other thirteen the following week. Mr. Hastings petitioned the house that he might be heard in his defence, and that he might be allowed a copy of the accusation. The first request the prosecutors granted: Mr. Burke objected to the last, at so early a stage of the prosecution; he was, however, over-ruled. The month of May was chiefly occupied in examining evidence; and on the first of June Mr. Burke adduced his first charge, in the following terms: "That there are grounds sufficient to charge Warren Hastings esq. with high crimes and misdemeanours, upon the matter of the said article." After a full discussion, it appeared to the house, that this war was unavoidable on the part of Mr. Hastings: this proposition was negatived by a majority of one hundred and nineteen to seventy-six. On the 3d of June Mr. Fox brought forward the charge respecting Benares: he contended that Mr. Hastings had acted unjustly in his first demands; that his subsequent conduct was a continuation and increase of injustice; but that his last proceedings, when he arrived in that province, were flagrantly iniquitous and tyrannical, and had rendered the British name odious in India. On the other hand, it was argued that the demands of Mr. Hastings were agreeable to the established conduct of superiors in India, from their tributary dependents, in situations of danger and emergency: the circumstances of affairs were extremely critical; the governor-general was reduced to the alternative of either requiring pecuniary supplies, or wanting money to pay his troops, when their most strenuous efforts were necessary for saving India against the confederacy of France,

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and the native powers; the rajah's refusal, combined with various parts of his conduct, manifested disaffection to the British establishment, when Mr. Hastings went to Benares; Cheyt Sing was also in actual rebellion, and intimately connected with the allied enemies of British India. His conduct was therefore justified by necessity, as part of that general system of wise and comprehensive policy which preserved our important interests in Indostan. Mr. Pitt admitted that the situation of affairs at that period was extremely critical, but considered the proceedings at Benares beyond the exigence of the case, and necessity of the service. It was carried by a majority of one hundred and nineteen to seventy-nine, that there was a matter of impeachment in the charge in question.

A majority, including Mr. Pitt, finds ground of impeachment in the proceedings against Cheyt Sing.

During these proceedings concerning part of the transactions in India, Mr. Dundas introduced a bill for the improvement of its government in future. Its principal object was to enlarge the powers of the governor-general; first, by vesting in him the nomination of the vacant seats in the council; secondly, by limiting the officers of the governor-general and commander in chief of the forces; and thirdly, by authorising him to decide upon every measure, even though not agreeable to the council. The proposition was opposed by Mr. Burke, as tending to introduce despotic government into India; but its framer insisted, that the responsibility of the governor-general was in proportion to his power, and that abuse of his trust was punishable by a fair and established judicature: he was himself satisfied, after long and attentive enquiry into the affairs of India, that all the recent mischiefs in that country had arisen from the parties formed in the different councils, and the factious spirit which had almost uniformly pervaded these bodies. By his system, the governor-general, on the one hand, would no longer be restrained by personal pique and

Mr. Dundas's bill for improving the government of British India.

and factious opposition, from forming and executing such plans as he thought most conducive to the public good; yet, on the other hand, he was amenable to the laws of his country for any unjust, tyrannical, or injurious exercise of his power. The authority allowed to the officer in question, was founded on the same general principle, as that conferred on the several members of the British state, sufficiently extensive to effect the useful purposes required, and so clearly bounded as to prevent pernicious exercise. CHAP. XXXV. 1786.

THE supplies of this session were eighteen thousand seamen, and about thirty thousand soldiers. A loan was wanted, 2,500,000*l.* were to be raised by exchequer bills, paid as usual, from the first aids of the following year; about 200,000*l.* were to be raised by a lottery. There were no new taxes, but a duty of a penny per gallon on spirits, on deals, and battens, on hair-powder and pomatum, the whole being intended to make up the sum stated to be wanted; that the surplus of income might be the annual million appropriated to the liquidation of the national debt. Supplies.

ON the 11th of July his majesty closed the session by a speech from the throne, in which he testified the highest satisfaction with the measures adopted for improving the resources of the country, and reducing the national debt. He continued to receive assurances that the peace was likely to remain undisturbed; the happy effects of general tranquillity appeared in the extension of the national commerce, and he should adopt every measure tending to confirm these advantages, and to give additional encouragement to the manufactures and industry of his people. The session terminates.

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Continental affairs. — Death and character of Frederic of Prussia. — His provisions for the security of his successor. — Revolution in Denmark. — Queen dowager disgraced, and the reins of government assumed by the prince royal: — Physical calamities in various parts of the continent. — Commercial and political pursuits of France. — Amiable character of Louis XVI. — Britain; — Alarming attempts against our sovereign, — providentially prevented. — Magnanimous humanity of the king. — The person proves to be a lunatic named Margaret Nicholson. — General consternation on hearing of the attempt. — Anxious affection of all ranks for their revered sovereign. — Congratulatory addresses.

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1786. Continental affairs. Death and character of Frederic of Prussia.

ON the continent of Europe, no event so much distinguished the year 1786, as the death of Frederic II. king of Prussia; who, for half a century, had acted such a conspicuous part on the grand military and political theatre. Were we to estimate his conduct on the simple principle, that a long and constant series of successes must arise from the possession and steady exertion of adequate qualities, we should find grounds for concluding, that the talents of Frederic, as a soldier, a statesman, and a law-giver, were singularly eminent. Concerning a man who has long enjoyed the uncontrolled direction of any species of affairs, we may fairly and candidly ask, in what state did he find the subject of his trust? did any material advantage assist, or difficulty retard, its improvement? has he left the professed objects of his care in a better or worse situation? When the government of Prussia devolved upon Frederic, he found a small, inconsiderable, and disjointed kingdom, without arts, industry, or

or riches; and without either the disposition or means of rendering the territory productive, the inhabitants prosperous, or the state respectable. The treasury was scanty, and the income inferior to the necessary expenditure; his dominions were surrounded by powerful and jealous potentates, who commanded numerous, valiant, and well-disciplined armies: in such circumstances, Frederic raised his country to be a great, well-compacted, and flourishing empire. By teaching his subjects industry, agricultural skill, manufactures, and commerce, he bettered their condition, civilized their manners, enlightened their understandings, and enabled them to acquire the comforts and enjoyments of life. His kingdom, which before occupied a small space in the geography, and still less in the politics, of Europe, was by him rendered the terror of its most formidable foes, and the admiration of mankind. Great as was the result, there are more special grounds for estimating the character of Frederic than bare effects: his progress exhibits the operations of the most efficacious qualities; an understanding that grasped every object of necessary or useful consideration; an invention, rapidly fertile in resources, increased both in force and effort with the difficulties by which its exertion was required: self-possession never suffered his powers to be suspended by either peril or calamity; intrepid courage faced danger, and magnanimous fortitude, sustaining adversity, rendered misfortunes temporary, which would have overwhelmed others in destruction. Never had a leader with so small a force to contend with such a powerful combination, not of mere multitude (as when Asiatic enervation by feeble crowds impotently tried to overwhelm European strength), but of hardy, disciplined, and veteran troops, equal to his own in prowess and military skill, and quadruple in number. Frederic experienced dismal reverses of fortune; having attained the highest pinnacle of success by dint

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dint of genius, he, from incidents and circumstances, against which no wisdom could provide, was driven to the lowest abyss of disaster; the very existence of his kingdom became doubtful; his inflexible constancy, uninterrupted perseverance, and transcendent abilities, triumphed in calamities, and rose through adversity to victory and glory. His exertions during the seven years war demonstrated to his enemies, that all their attempts to crush Frederic were unavailing against him, and recoiled on themselves. Hostilities being terminated, he had leisure to cultivate the arts of peace, and both in planning and executing measures for that purpose, he proved that his mind was formed for excelling not only in war, but in every other great and difficult pursuit to which circumstances might require the direction of his efforts. Complete comprehension of objects simplified plans for their attainment: the Prussian king was a great inventor in the military system, particularly in the mode of attack. His object was to render the assault irresistible in one or more points, so that the confusion produced there might be communicated to the whole line; the means were not merely to advance intrepidly and charge vigorously, but in the moment of onset to form such unforeseen and skilful dispositions, as would enable an army, greatly inferior in number, to surpass the enemy in exertion, and wherever the action was likely to prove most decisive, to bring a greater front to act against a smaller.[f] His internal improvements proposed at once to increase the resources and meliorate the character of his subjects; to render them, both from external circumstances and personal qualities, fitter for securing and extending individual and national prosperity, virtue, and happiness. Addicted himself to letters, he was extremely attentive to the education of his

[f] See Gillies's Frederic.

subjects,

subjects, according to their circumstances, condition, or probable and destined pursuits. Tinctured with infidelity, he was far from encouraging its general diffusion. Totally free himself from bigotted prejudice or superstition, he knew the compatibility of such errors in others with most beneficial conduct, and granted every sect full and undisturbed toleration. That there were great alloys among Frederic's excellencies, he would be a partial panegyrist, not an impartial historian, who should deny. The justice of several parts of his conduct in the early part of his reign was very questionable. One very important act in a later period admits of no dispute: the dismemberment of Poland will always remain a monument of exorbitant ambition and unjustifiable usurpation by Frederic and the other powers concerned. It would not be difficult to evince, that both the subjects thus forcibly acquired were bettered in their condition by this annexation; but shallow would be the moralist who, from eventual and contingent good, would defend injustice. It might be easily shewn that the greater number of victorious commanders, in proportion to their power, have been guilty of as ambitious usurpations as Frederic, and that not many of them have by their victories done so much good. In appreciating conduct we must consider the circumstances and opportunities of the agent, and the temptations which these produced; how very few men, it may be asked, having a very desirable object within their grasp, would abstain from possessing it, even though not conformable to strict justice. The perspicacious and recollecting observer of mankind must recognise such conduct to be natural, but the just estimator of moral sentiments and actions will reprobate it as unjust. Frederic, with considerable moral defects, possessed very high moral and the very highest intellectual excellencies; he raised a small poor territory to be a great, opulent, and powerful king-

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dom;

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dom; and rendered ignorant and uncivilized inhabitants an enlightened and civilized people. To a very great portion of mankind most momentous benefits have accrued from the efforts of the renowned Frederic.

His provisions for the security of his successor.

As the power of Prussia had arisen from the counsels and exertions of Frederic, many apprehended, that, resting on his character, its stability would be endangered by his death; and supposed, that the ambitious confederation of the imperial courts, so recently thwarted by the vigilant sagacity of Frederic, would take advantage of his death, and endeavour to reduce northern Germany to dependence. But the provisions of Frederic had not been temporary, to expire with his own life: he acquired and formed such strength and power as could be protected by mediocrity of talents, that he knew was to be generally expected in sovereigns as well as others, and which only he saw his immediate successor to possess. His counsellors had been trained by himself, and were likely to continue the plan of policy which the object of their adoration had delineated and conducted with so signal success. For the preservation of his dominions, Frederic bequeathed the most effectual securities to his successor which human wisdom could provide or devise, by leaving him a full treasury, and a formidable army, wise and experienced counsellors, and a people enthusiastically attached to the government and memory of their illustrious king. The imperial powers thought it by no means expedient to interfere with a kingdom so powerfully protected, and were besides maturing their preparations for their own principal design, in the prosecution of which it was their obvious interests to win Prussia to forbearance, instead of provoking her to war. Thus the death of Frederic made no immediate perceivable difference in the politics of Europe.

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Revolution in Denmark.

In Denmark, a revolution had taken place in 1784, which proved very beneficial to that kingdom. Ever since 1772, the queen-dowager having triumphed over the unfortunate and ill-used Matilda, from the imbecillity of the king, retained the supreme power which she had acquired by such unjustifiable means. Her sway was indeed established beyond all controul, and beyond the probability of subversion. She had filled the great offices of state with her adherents and favourites; the son of the unhappy Matilda was a child, and the chances against his life at that tender age being considerable, Julia's son, prince Frederic, (the king's half-brother,) was regarded as the presumptive successor to the throne: all things seemed to concur in securing her influence and authority for life. The exercise of her dominion was far from dispelling the hatred which the dowager-queen so deservedly incurred by her means of elevation. Imperious and tyrannical, she sacrificed the national good to the interests of her supporters and minions; and was hateful throughout the kingdom, except to her own creatures. Retribution though slow was not the less sure; as the prince royal approached to maturity, he indicated qualities that excited the hopes of the people in general, and especially of those, many in number, who were disgusted with the queen-dowager's government. In the seventeenth year of his age, the heir of the crown, by his manly abilities and character, was become the universal favourite of the nation, and in a few months acquired such influence and power as to overwhelm the usurpers of his father's authority. With such wisdom and secrecy had he formed his measures, that, being declared of age at seventeen, he was placed at the head of the council-board; when he acquainted the junto that directed the affairs of the kingdom under the queen-dowager, that the king his father had no farther occasion for their services, before

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before they had conceived the most distant idea of their approaching downfal. Having dismissed these ministers, he published an ordinance, that no orders from the council of state were in future to be received, or considered valid, which had not been previously reported to the king, signed by him, and counter-signed by the prince royal. Having accomplished so desirable and beneficial a change, the prince conducted himself with temperate, wise, and magnanimous policy toward the junto and its head. He abstained from punishing the planners and most active instruments of the revolution 1772, any farther than by the loss of their offices. On the queen herself he bestowed a superb castle and extensive demesnes in Holstein, whence it was understood she was not to return to court. Prince Frederic had never taken any share in his mother's cabals; to him his nephew presented great possessions, and made him second to himself in the cabinet-council. His subsequent conduct confirmed and increased the opinion of his countrymen; he bestowed the closest attention on public business, and studied the political and commercial interests of Denmark. His highness planned and executed a very great and royal work, which was finished in 1786, the formation of a short and direct junction between the Baltic and the German ocean. This was effected by drawing a navigable canal from west to east across the peninsula of Jutland. Besides his attention to official duty, the prince manifested a disposition to literature, and became the patron of learning and learned men.

Queen-dowager disgraced, and the reins of government assumed by the prince royal.

DURING this year and the two former, various parts of the world suffered dreadful calamities from physical causes. Earthquakes, which had so desolated Calabria and other parts of Europe, raged both in Asia and America. In Europe and the adjacent parts of Africa and Asia, there was a succession of severe and irregular seasons; violent storms of

Physical calamities in various parts of the continent.

of rain spread inundations over the richest parts of Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and France. Rigorous cold destroyed the crops of Norway and Sweden; and the same causes prevented Livonia from affording them the usual supplies: even the fisheries of the north did not yield their wonted stores; the consequences were, that Norway, notwithstanding every effort of government, laboured under an absolute famine. In Iceland, a new kind of calamity ravaged the country; mount Hecla, and the other volcanos which so much distinguish that island, although perhaps they promote the purposes of vegetation by communicating a genial warmth to its frozen bosom, have at all times been the terror, and at particular periods the scourge and destroyers, of the inhabitants. The present calamity, however, was totally new: the country with its products were now consumed by subterraneous fire. This destroyer of nature made its first appearance in June 1784, reduced to cinders every thing which it met, and continued burning until the month of May in the following year, having in that time extended its devastation about twenty leagues in length, and from four to five in breadth. The great river Skaptage, which was from seven to eight fathoms in depth, and half a league in width, was entirely dried up, its bed and channel presenting a dreadful yawning chasm.[g] A similar fire broke out about this time on the eastern side of the same range of mountains, and pursued its course in the opposite direction. The pestilence also raged with uncommon malignity over those countries which it usually pervades: from the Atlantic borders of Morocco to the extremities of Egypt, and from Palestine to the mouth of the Euxine, the African and Asiatic coasts of the Mediterranean, with those of Thrace on the opposite side,

[g] About a fourth part of the consumed soil consisted of a lava, and of mossy bogs or marshes; the remains of the burnt earth resembled vast heaps of calcined stones, and were of the colour of vitriol. Annual Register 1786, History of Europe, p. 60.

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the cruelty of its ravages was severe, and the destruction of mankind greater, than at any period within the reach of memory, or perhaps within the records of history.

Commercial and political pursuits of France.

FRANCE persevered in her attention to maritime and commercial affairs, and endeavoured to increase the number of her naval arsenals and harbours on the ocean. The port of Cherburg, on the coast of Normandy, from its vicinity to England, and lying directly opposite to Hampshire, seemed directly calculated for this purpose. Here the French were constructing a capacious basin, with docks and other requisites necessary to a great naval arsenal; the works were stupendous. It was proposed to cover the road, being about a league and a half in length, with a series of moles, leaving only two sufficient openings, one for the passage of ships of the largest size, and the other for trading vessels. Forts, with batteries of the heaviest cannon, were to be erected on the different moles, in such situations as to be impregnable, and to render the approach of an enemy utterly impracticable. M. Calonne, the prime minister of France, in order to open the way for the introduction of foreign industry, procured the publication of a law, which might be considered as a counterpart of the noted edict of Nantz. This was a decree, which invited strangers of all christian nations and religious persuasions to settle in the country, and enabled them to purchase lands and enjoy all the rights of citizens.[h] To encourage artists and manufacturers of all countries to settle in France, another ordinance was published, allowing them the same privileges which they enjoyed in

[h] The judicious author of the history of Europe, in the Annual Register of 1786, observes, that it afforded a singular object of moral and political consideration, to behold fourteen vessels from North America arrive together in the harbour of Dunkirk, freighted with the families, goods, and property of a colony of quakers and baptists (the most rigid, perhaps, in their religious principles of any among the reformed), who were come to settle at that place, in a Roman catholic country, and under the government of the French monarch; two circumstances the most directly opposite to their ancient sentiments, whether political or religious.

their

their native lands, and for a limited time granting them an immunity from all duties on the importation of the raw materials that were used in their manufactures; also exempting them and their workmen from the payment of taxes, and every personal impost. On these conditions they were obliged to continue for a specified number of years in the kingdom, but, at the expiration of that term, they were at liberty to depart themselves, and to move their property wherever they chose. The king and his ministry were no less disposed to favour the native protestants, as far as was consistent with the well-being and security of the national church: indulgences were likewise extended this year to the peasants, who long had been grievously oppressed; they were relieved from various arbitrary exactions, both of labour and money, and their condition was in general meliorated. The great objects which the mild and benevolent Louis pursued were, the improvement of the strength and productiveness of his kingdom, the alleviation of oppressions interwoven with the government, as it had descended to him from his ancestors, and the extension of the blessings of liberty to his people. CHAP. XXXVI. 1786.

THE most remarkable domestic occurrence of the year was an attempt, originating in phrenzy, that fortunately answered no other purpose than to demonstrate the warm affection with which a happy, feeling, and grateful people regarded their sovereign. On Wednesday the 2d of August, his Majesty came to town to the levee; as he was alighting from his carriage at the garden-gate of St. James's palace, opposite to the duke of Marlborough's wall, a woman, decently dressed, presented to the king a paper folded up in the form of a petition; his majesty, stooping to receive it, felt at his stomach a thrust, which passed between his coat and waistcoat; drawing back, he said, "What does the woman mean?" At that instant a yeoman of the guards Alarming attempt against our sovereign, providentially prevented.

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guards laying hold of her arm, observed something fall from her hand, and called out, "'Tis a knife!" The king said, "I am not hurt; take care of the woman; do not hurt her." Much affected by the attempt, his majesty said, in a voice expressive of tender feelings, "I am sure I have not deserved such treatment from any of my subjects!" On opening the paper, when he entered the royal apartments, he found written: "To the king's most excellent majesty;" the usual head to petitions; but nothing more. The woman was immediately taken into custody, and carried to the guard-chamber. Being questioned how she could make such a wicked and daring attempt; her answer was, "That when she was brought before proper persons, she would give her reasons." From the hour of twelve to five she remained in a chamber to which she was conducted, but would not answer one word to any person. In the evening, after the levee was broken up, she was examined by the ministers, the law officers of the crown, and several magistrates. Her replies, claiming the crown as her property, and threatening the nation with bloodshed for many ages if her right was denied, indicated an insanity; which, from appearances, examination, and subsequent inquiry, was soon discovered to be real: her name proved to be Margaret Nicholson. It was imagined by many, that disappointment of her own, or some near connexion, concerning a place under government, had contributed to her insanity, and given her disordered fancy such a direction; but when her history was traced, it was found to have no relation to either the court or government. After a short consultation, it was resolved that she should be sent to Bethlehem hospital, where she has been confined ever since.

Magnanimous humanity of the king.

The attempter proves to be a lunatic named Margaret Nicholson.

Most providential it was, that this wretched creature made use of her left hand, her other presenting the petition; and that its position was such, that she

she could only aim obliquely. Had her right hand been employed, which, where she stood, could have struck directly, dismal might the consequence have been. Even with the aim which she took, the happiness of the nation, in the safety of its revered monarch, was highly indebted to our king's presence of mind. Had his majesty been thrown into confusion by a danger so unexpected, the fatal deed might have been perpetrated, before the attempt was perceived. Next to his magnanimity, the considerate humanity of the sovereign shone most evidently conspicuous. His benevolent injunction to abstain from hurting a person who had compassed against him so atrocious an act, most probably saved the assassin from the summary and immediate vengeance of his surrounding subjects. Similar conduct in similar circumstances, this history has still to record, concerning the same exalted character. Fortunately for their feelings, neither her majesty nor any of the royal offspring were present. The intelligence of the danger was accompanied by the certain information that it was escaped. The report of the aim excited horror and indignant resentment through the nation, until the state of the perpetrator's mind was made generally known, and the dreadful impression of the calamity threatened yielded to delight that it had threatened in vain. The exquisite pleasure that results from terrible and impending evil avoided, poured itself in addresses of ardent and heart-felt loyalty from every quarter of the kingdom. His subjects before knew that they loved and revered their king; but now only felt the full force of these affections, when the impression present to their minds was the imminent danger of their object.

General consternation on hearing of the attempt.

Anxious affection of all ranks for their sovereign.

Congratulatory addresses on the escape of the beloved sovereign.

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Mr. Pitt's enlarged views on the relation between this country and France.—Perceives that peace and amicable intercourse is the interest of both countries. — Thinks past enmity not an unsurmountable bar to permanent reconciliation. —Projects a commercial intercourse, to be mutually beneficial by a reciprocal exchange of surplus for supply. — Seeks the best assistance, and employs the most skilful agents. — Principle and details of the treaty. — Meeting of parliament and the king's speech. — Treaty submitted to parliament. — Mr. Fox and his coadjutors oppose the treaty. — Arguments. — France the unalterable enemy of Great Britain. — Mutual interest can never eradicate that sentiment. — Every commercial connexion with France has been injurious to Britain. — For the treaty, denied that there is any unalterable enmity between France and this country. — Not always enemies. — The repeated discomfiture of France, warring against the navy of England, at length taught her the policy of peace. — The treaty supported by a great majority. — Convention with Spain. — Consolidation of the customs. — Application of the dissenters for the repeal of the test act. — Number and respectability of the dissenters as a body. — Distinguished talents of some of their leaders. — Dissenters favourable to Mr. Pitt, and thence expect his support of their application. — Previous steps to prepossess the public in their favour. — Mr. Beaufoy demonstrates their zeal for liberty and the present establishment. — Lord North, a moderate tory, opposes their application, as inimical to the church. — Mr. Pitt opposes it on the grounds of political expediency. — The test no infringement of toleration, merely a condition of admissibility to certain offices of trust. — Eminent dissenters had avowed themselves desirous of subverting the church; — therefore not expedient to extend their power. — Application rejected. — Bill for the relief of insolvent debtors. — Lord Rawdon's enlightened and liberal policy. — Bill negatived. — Enquiry about Scotch peerages. — Magnanimous sacrifice by the prince of Wales of splendor to justice. — Situation of his highness. — Satisfactory adjustments. — Proceedings respecting

specting Mr. Hastings. — Writings in his defence. — The nation long averse to his impeachment. — Hastings's cause generally popular. — Eloquence gives a turn to public opinion. — Celebrated speech of Mr. Sheridan on the Begum charge. — Its effects on the house of commons and the public. — Singular instance of its impression on a literary defender of Mr. Hastings. — A committee appointed to prepare articles of impeachment. — The commons impeach Warren Hastings at the bar of the house of lords. — Supplies. — Favourable state of the finances. — Mr. Dundas brings forward the financial state of British India. — Promising aspect of affairs.

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1786. Enlarged views of Mr. Pitt on the relations between Britain and France.

HISTORY recorded that France and England had been usually jealous, and often hostile: statesmen on both sides acted upon an assumption, that rivalry and enmity were unavoidable consequences of their situation; and, therefore, that the chief objects of external policy to both, were reciprocal suspicion, and provision for probable enmity. The bold and soaring genius of Pitt was not to be trammelled by precedent: he investigated principle, and combining generalization with the experience of political systems and events, easily traced effects, either good or bad, to their causes; and could discover in what cases and circumstances, continuance, or change of plan or of practice, was expedient or unwise. The sagacity of this minister analized the history and spirit of the wars which had been carried on between Britain and France, since trade and navigation became so much the objects of European pursuits: and saw that they had commonly arisen from a desire on the side of France of equalling, and even surpassing, Britain on her peculiar element. He considered the event, as well as the origin: every endeavour of our neighbour to triumph by sea had diminished the riches and power which she sought to increase by a contest: both her commerce and naval force had been uniformly reduced by the very wars, through which she attempted their extension. The resources of Britain had risen in

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proportion to the power which she was compelled to combat; and all the confederacies which her rival could form, were incapable of depriving this island of her maritime pre-eminence: hence it was evident, that no state which sought opulence and strength, through commercial efforts, acted wisely in provoking to conflict the mistress of the ocean, who could so effectually destroy the trade of her foes: it was, therefore, the interest of France to desist from that hostile policy which had so much obstructed the improvements of her immense resources. Peace with France was no less beneficial to Britain, which had so far consulted her advantage, as to abstain from offensive hostility against her neighbour: within the period of great commercial enterprise in northern and western Europe, England had never gone to war, but to repel aggression, direct or circuitous. Concord being the mutual interest of the parties, Mr. Pitt conceived the noble design of changing the contentious system of policy which had so long prevailed; and the execution, though difficult, he had solid reasons not to believe impracticable. That hereditary enmity was not an unsurmountable obstacle to reconciliation and close alliance, was clearly demonstrated from the former and recent relations between France and Spain, and between France and Austria. Those powers, which had been the constant enemies of France throughout the seventeenth century, and one of them during more than one half of the eighteenth, were now her fastest friends; why might not permanent amity be established between Britain and her former rival? The most effectual means of inducing the two countries to pursue objects so conducive to their mutual benefit, he thought, would be a commercial intercourse, which should reciprocally increase the value of productive labour. The minister derived his knowledge and philosophy from the purest sources: he sought information, either particular

Perceives that peace and amicable intercourse is the interest of countries.

Thinks past enmity not an unsurmountable bar to permanent reconciliation.

particular or general, wherever it was to be found authentic and important; and was peculiarly happy in arranging details, and, from either masses or systems, selecting and applying what was best fitted for his purpose. Political economy and commercial science he learned from Smith: he agreed with that illustrious writer in his estimate of the reciprocal advantage that might accrue to industrious and skilful nations, from an unfettered trade, which should stimulate their respective efforts. Before he formed his scheme for promoting an intercourse between the two chief nations of the world, he made himself thoroughly acquainted with the state of facts, the actual productions, and the probable resources of the respective countries. The minister possessed that ability and skill in chusing coadjutors, which results from a thorough comprehension of characters, and a nice discernment of the appropriate talents and knowledge, dispositions and conduct, peculiarly adapted to any specific end. For commercial information and science, especially the history and actual state of modern trade, no man exceeded Lord Hawkesbury: from that able statesman he derived very important assistance in preparing his scheme. Greatly did he also profit by Mr. Eden, whose acuteness and conversancy with every subject of commerce and diplomatic experience, rendered him a most valuable auxiliary in digesting and composing the plan at home, and the ablest agent for negociating and concluding an advantageous agreement with France. Eden accordingly repaired to Paris; where he conducted and completed the desired arrangement with the ministers of Louis.

Seeks the best assistance, and employs the most skilful agents.

THE treaty in question established reciprocal liberty of commerce between the two countries. The subjects of each power were to navigate and resort to the dominions of the other, without any disturbance or question, except for transgressing the

Principle and details of the treaty.

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the laws. The prohibitory duties in each kingdom, by enhancing the price, had reciprocally discouraged the sale of their principal commodities; these were now modified to the satisfaction of both by a tariff. The wines of France, to be imported into England, were subjected to no higher duty than the productions of Portugal; the duties on brandies and various other articles were to be lowered in proportion; and the commodities of Britain were to be equally favoured in France. On the same basis of reciprocity were the articles respecting disputes between the mercantile, maritime, or other subjects of the two countries, and various details of civil, commercial, and political intercourse were to be adjusted. In whatever related to the lading and unlading of ships, the safety of merchandize, goods and effects, the succession to personal estates, as well as the protection of individuals, their personal liberty, and the administration of justice, the subjects of the two contracting parties were to enjoy in their respective dominions the same privileges, liberties, and rights, as the nation or nations most highly favoured by each. Should, hereafter, through inadvertency or otherwise, any infractions or contraventions of the treaty be committed on either side, the friendship and good understanding should not immediately thereupon be interrupted; but this treaty should subsist in all its force, and proper remedies should be procured for removing the inconveniencies, as likewise for the reparation of injuries. If the subjects of either kingdom should be found guilty, they only should be punished and severely chastised. The relative commercial condition and resources, on which Mr. Pitt grounded his conclusions, he generalized into concise propositions. At first sight it appeared, that France had the advantage in the gift of soil and climate, and in the amount of her natural produce; while Britain was on her part confessedly superior in her manufactures

factures and artificial productions. This was their relative condition, and was the precise ground on which he imagined that a valuable correspondence and connexion might be established. Having each her own distinct staples; each that which the other wanted, and no clashing in the grand outlines of their respective riches; they were like two great traders in different branches, and might enter into a traffic mutually beneficial. The respective princes reserved to themselves the right of revising this treaty after the term of twelve years, to propose and make such alterations as the times and circumstances should have rendered proper or necessary for the commercial interests of their subjects. This revision should be completed in the space of a year, after which the present treaty should be of no effect; but in that event the good harmony and friendly correspondence between the two nations should not suffer the least diminution.

In a treaty formed on the basis of reciprocal freedom of trade, the advantage to the contracting parties was, and necessarily must be, in the compound rates of their resources and skilful industry. At first sight, from the climate and soil of France, the balance of commercial benefit appeared in favour of that country, and so many politicians reasoned with much plausibility; but Mr. Pitt had profoundly considered the relative circumstances, and justly concluded that the French industry and skill was much more inferior to the British industry and skill, than the French soil and climate were superior to the British soil and climate; and thus, that greater benefit would accrue to this country from the freedom of trade: experience justified his conclusions.

1787. Meeting of parliament, and the king's speech.

The commercial treaty was the chief object which occupied the public attention when parliament met on the 23d of January 1787. The speech from the throne mentioned the tranquil state of Europe,

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Europe, and the friendly dispositions of foreign powers to this country. His majesty informed parliament, that a treaty of navigation and commerce had been concluded between this country and France, and recommended it to the consideration of the houses, under two heads; its tendency to encourage the industry and extension of commerce, and to promote such an amicable intercourse as would give additional permanence to the blessings of peace: these were also the objects which his majesty had in view in other treaties which he was negociating. A convention was formed between Britain and Spain, respecting the cutting of log-wood: he farther directed their attention to plans, which had been framed by his orders, for transporting to Botany Bay, in New Holland, a number of convicts, in order to remove the inconvenience which arose from the crowded state of the gaols in different parts of the kingdom: he trusted they would also devise regulations for simplifying the public accounts, in various branches of the revenue: he relied upon the uniform continuance of their exertions in pursuit of such objects, as might tend still farther to improve the national resources, and to promote and confirm the welfare and happiness of his people. In discussing the proposed answer to the speech, some general observations were made upon the treaty by Mr. Fox; but they produced no debate, as the minister and his friends reserved their reasonings until the consideration of the subject was properly before the house.

The treaty is submitted to parliament.

On the 4th of February the treaty was submitted to parliament. After the minister had explained and supported the object, spirit, and provisions of this treaty, numbers of the opposite side attacked it on a variety of grounds, as relative to commerce, revenue, the naval, and the political interests of Britain. The arguments derived from our manufactures

factures were, they contended, founded on a presumption, that the French character would not admit of equal industry as the English: that opinion was asserted to be unjust: the treaty would facilitate and encourage that contraband trade, which it had been the professed object of Mr. Pitt's policy to suppress: the free access of French ships to the British shores, would be unquestionably by many employed to the purposes of smuggling, and thus the revenue would be greatly injured. By reducing the duties on French wines, we had conceded advantages to France, for which we did not receive an equivalent: we had farther interfered with the Methven treaty, and the interests of our natural ally, Portugal. Respecting the naval operation of the treaty, it was a substitution of a near for a remote market, and requiring short trips would not exercise nor form nautical skill: but the political effects of the treaty were chiefly reprobated: one argument, often repeated, was founded upon an authority to which many politicians would bow on the recurrence of precisely similar cases. Mr. Pitt, the elder, having found the country at war with France, had displayed the whole vigour of his genius in measures most fatally hostile to France; therefore it was unwise in any minister to cultivate friendship with France, and particularly wrong in the son of such a father. France was the natural enemy of England, and no sincerity could be expected in any professions of friendship, no stability in any contract: nations which bordered on each other, could never thoroughly agree, for this single reason, that they were neighbours: all history and experience, according to opposition, assured us of the fact. Mr. Fox in particular maintained, that France was the inveterate and unalterable enemy of Great Britain; no mutual interest could possibly eradicate what was deeply rooted in her constitution. The intercourse which this treaty would produce, must be extremely

Mr. Fox and his coadjutors oppose the treaty.

Arguments.

France the unalterable enemy of Great Britain. Mutual interest can never eradicate that sentiment.

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extremely hurtful to the superior national character of England. Evil communication corrupts good manners. The nearer the two nations were drawn into contract, and the more successfully they were invited to mingle with each other, in the same proportion the remaining morals, principles, and vigour of the English national mind would be enervated and corrupted. No commercial treaty formed between the two countries had ever been beneficial to this country: on the contrary, that which followed the peace of Utrecht would have been extremely injurious, and every mercantile connexion with France had been always injurious to England.

Every commercial connexion with France has been injurious to Britain.

In defence of the treaty it was maintained, that the comparative character of the English and French manufactures, and artificial productions, would render the free trade more beneficial to this country than to France, notwithstanding her soil, climate, and natural produce. We had agreed by this treaty to take from France, on small duties, the luxuries of her soil, which, however, the refinement of this country had converted into necessaries. The wines of France, with all their high duties, already found their way to our tables; and was it then a serious injury to admit them on easier terms? The admission of them would not supplant the wines of Portugal or of Spain, but only a useless and pernicious manufacture in our own country. The diminution on brandy was also an eligible measure, and would have a material effect in preventing the contraband trade in an article so much used. It had been objected, that no beneficial treaty would be formed between this country and France, because no such treaty had ever been formed, and because, on the contrary, a commercial intercourse with her had always been hurtful to England: this reasoning was completely fallacious; it deduced a similar conclusion from totally dissimilar premises. For a long series of years we had no commercial connexion

Arguments for the treaty.

with France, and the relative value of the respective productions were totally changed. When a treaty was proposed at the peace of Utrecht, England was extremely deficient in those manufactures in which she now excelled, and much inferior to France in produce; by a free trade she must then have been a great loser, because she would have given much more than she would have received: now she would be a great gainer, because she would receive much more than she gave. The present treaty did not in the smallest degree affect the stipulations with Portugal. The French wines would be still much dearer, notwithstanding the diminution of the duties. In a political view it certainly could be no argument against the adoption of a system of conduct in one species of circumstances, that a contrary system had been pursued with acknowledged wisdom in a different situation of affairs. Although Mr. Pitt the father had, when his country was at war with France, employed the most energetic and successful efforts to be victorious in war, that was no reason that Mr. Pitt the son should not endeavour equally to make the best of existing circumstances, by promoting commerce with the same country when at peace. The minister himself controverted Mr. Fox's position, that France was unalterably the enemy of the country. The existence of eternal enmity, was totally inconsistent with the constitution of the human mind, the history of mankind, and the experience of political societies. Every state recorded in history, had been at different times in friendship or amity with its several neighbours. The dissension between France and this country has arisen from mistaken ambition on her side; there was no more natural antipathy between an Englishman and a Frenchman, than between a Frenchman and a Spaniard, or a Frenchman and a German. France, after being long hostile to the house of Austria, had at last discovered, that it was much more advantageous

Denied that there is any unalterable enmity between France and Britain.

tageous

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tageous for both parties to cultivate peace and harmony, than to impair their respective strength, and exhaust their resources. Hostilities had been carried on between France and Austria, without very long intervals of peace, for two centuries and a half. During the greater part of the seventeenth century, profound peace had subsisted between France and England; there was nothing improbable in an idea that such a system might again prevail; but should war again arise, would the treaty deprive us of our natural watchfulness, or our accustomed strength? On the contrary, as it must enrich the nation, it would also prove the means of enabling her to combat her enemy with more powerful effect: but it was now much less likely that our resources should be called for such a purpose, than at former periods.

The repeated discomfiture of France, warring against the navy of England, at length taught her the policy of peace.

If ever France and her allies could have expected to overwhelm England, their hopes might have been sanguine in the American war; they had united the whole maritime world to reduce her commerce and her navy, but they had totally failed in reducing our naval power, and sunk her finances to a situation of extreme embarrassment; hence, though it was always the interest of France to avoid war with Great Britain, her present circumstances rendered it more necessary than ever to abstain from hostilities, which, under her embarrassment, would expose her to inevitable bankruptcy. On the other hand, by cultivating a connexion with this country, she must perceive the means of recovering from her difficulties. From all these considerations, we might safely infer the sincerity of France; no doubt that country would gain by the treaty; the French would not yield advantages without the expectation of a return: unless the other party derived benefit from the agreement, we could have little hopes of its permanency; but Britain would reap much more advantage. France gained for her wines, and her productions, an extensive and opulent market; we did the

By the treaty both parties procure a more extensive market for their respective productions, than either could elsewhere.

the same to a much greater degree: she procured a market of eight millions of people; we a market of twenty-four millions; France gained this market for her produce, which employed few hands in the preparation, gave small encouragement to navigation, and afforded little to the state; we gained this market for our manufactures, which employed many hundred thousand of our countrymen in collecting the materials from all corners of the world, advanced our maritime strength, and in every article and stage of its progress contributed largely to the state.

THE treaty underwent many and various discussions through its passage in both houses; and although there neither was, nor indeed could be much novelty of argument, as it had been so fully canvassed, yet in both houses it called forward an exhibition of commercial knowledge and philosophy, superior to any that had ever appeared in the British, and consequently in any senate. In the house of commons several young members very eminently distinguished themselves, by speeches for and against the treaty, especially Mr. Grenville on the one side, Mr. Grey and Mr. Windham on the other. In the house of peers, though lord Thurlow, and lord Hawkesbury, lord Loughborough, and lord Carlisle, with other peers on both sides, exerted their respective abilities upon this subject, yet the fullest and most detailed reasonings were presented by the marquis of Lansdown, and the bishop of Landaff. The oration of the former nobleman, in some respects, coincided with the supporters, and in others with the opposers of the treaty. He with ministers contended on the sound policy of cultivating an amicable intercourse with France; and with the other side, that the reciprocity on which the treaty was said to be founded was merely ideal, and that Britain must greatly lose by the stipulation: these objections were weighty, if well grounded; nevertheless he declared his

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warm and cordial support of the treaty.[j] The Bishop of Landaff, in his oration, manifested the same vigour of mind and industry of enquiry, which rendered him so eminent in chemistry and theology, and procured the applause of both parties. The treaty was approved by a great majority of both houses; and on the eighth of March an address was presented to both houses, testifying their joint approbation of the treaty with France.

The treaty is supported by a great majority.

THE convention with Spain, to which his majesty's speech had alluded, was of very secondary and subordinate moment, when compared with the treaty that we have been considering; nevertheless, it was by no means unimportant. The agreement in question was concluded the 14th of July[k] 1786, and chiefly regarded the privilege of cutting logwood. The British possessions on the Musquito shore were ceded in exchange for a tract of land on the Bay of Honduras. The contract produced little animadversion in the house of commons, but

[j] An altercation arose from the debate between the marquis and the duke of Richmond: the former had stated the danger of the fortifications of Cherburg, and, while on that subject, had digressed to make a severe animadversion on his grace's plan for fortifying Portsmouth and Plymouth. The duke observed, that the marquis's opinion declared orally and in writing, as witnesses and letters could prove, had, when himself minister, declared his perfect approbation of the plan, to reprobate which he had now deviated from the question. It appeared, however, in investigation, that the marquis had never expressly and explicitly either said or written, that he concurred with the duke of Richmond; his grace and Mr. Pitt, and other hearers, had only inferred his sentiments from his words and conduct, but could not affirm, that he had plainly and categorically said, that he approved of the plan. They thought that he had agreed to the plan, because he spoke of it very favourably when consulted on the subject. He had, as first lord of the treasury, included a sum for the proposed fortifications in the estimates of expence for the year. His lordship, however, now declared, that he had always disapproved of the scheme, and challenged his grace to produce a scrap of writing to the contrary. Although, by this declaration, it would appear that those senators were mistaken in their construction of his words and actions, it must be allowed, that their interpretation was, according to the usual rules of reasoning, not very unnatural. The applicability, however, of a general criterion to the explanation of a particular case, must depend in a great degree on the peculiar qualities of the subject. The duke of Richmond went so far as to charge his lordship with insincerity; an allegation which the noble peer reprobated with great indignation. In vindicating himself, the marquis of Lansdown asserted, that OPENNESS *was his characteristic*, and that it was solely from the consideration of the unguardedness of his temper, that, by the advice of his friends, he had secluded himself from the world.

[k] See State Papers.

underwent

underwent severe strictures in the house of lords; the opponents of administration contended, that we certainly could have made a better bargain, than to have ceded to Spain a tract of land, at least as large as the whole kingdom of Portugal, which yielded us cotton, indigo, mahogany, and sugar, in exchange for a liberty to cut logwood, and a scanty settlement of twelve miles in extent: it was moreover ungrateful to the British subjects who resided there on the faith of our protection, and who had contributed every effort in their power to assist their country. Ministers replied, that the complaint respecting the value of the cession arose from geographical and statistical inaccuracy. The territory which we relinquished was much less extensive and productive than lords in opposition apprehended. On the second subject of censure they asserted, that the number of British subjects settled there did not amount to one hundred and forty; and provision was made for the security of their persons and effects: these arguments being satisfactory to the majority of the house, they declared their approbation of the treaty.

Consolidation of the customs.

One of the subjects recommended to parliament by the speech from the throne, was the consolidation of the customs. The increasing commerce of this country on the one hand, and its accumulated burthens on the other, had so widely exceeded the expectation of our ancestors, and all the grounds of calculation on which they founded their system of finance, that the principles which they adopted, though sufficiently suited to the narrow and confined scale of our former exigencies and resources, were no longer applicable. The consequence of retaining the old principle, under the altered circumstances of the country, had been in several points of view very detrimental to the interests of the nation. The first institution of the subsisting duties of the customs was made by the statute of the twelfth

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year of king Charles II., under the names of tonnage and poundage; the first, an impost upon wines, measured by the quantity imported; and the second, on the price of all other articles. The last was therefore liable to great inaccuracies: it was not calculated according to the real value of the commodities, but by an arbitrary estimation, perhaps the market-price of the article at the time of imposing the duty: this principle, when once adopted, was pursued in every fresh subsidy: in some instances it had operated, by imposing additional duties calculated at so much per cent. upon the duty already paid; in others it laid a farther impost of the same description on a particular denomination of the commodity; almost all the additional subsidies had been appropriated to some specific fund for the payment of certain annuities: there must, therefore, be a separate calculation for each made at the custom-house; and, from the complexity of the whole system, it was scarcely possible that a merchant could be acquainted, by any calculations of his own, with the exact amount of what he was to pay. To remedy this great abuse, Mr. Pitt proposed to abolish all the duties that now subsisted in this confused and complex manner, and to substitute one single duty on each article, amounting, as nearly as possible, to the aggregate of the various subsidies now paid; only where a fraction was found in any of the sums, to change it for the nearest integral number, usually taking the higher rather than the lower. This advance would produce an increase in the revenue to the amount of 20,000 *l.* per annum, and lay upon the public a burden, which must be amply compensated by the relief which the merchants were to experience from the intended alteration. Mr. Pitt had given complete attention to this business; and had not left one person unconsulted from whom any information could be obtained; and the greatest diligence had been

been used to circulate the plan among the most competent judges of those persons who were immediately concerned in its operation and effects. The proposed scheme caused no debate; the object was so evidently advantageous, and the means so well adapted, as to command the concurrence and approbation of the whole House[1]; and a bill for the purpose was introduced and passed. On the 26th of April, Mr. Pitt presented to the house of commons a bill, stating, that notorious frauds had been committed in the collection of the tax on post horses, and providing that, as a remedy to the evil, the tax should be farmed. The several districts were to be put up to public auction at the present amount received in each, and at the highest rate which it ever had produced; and it was not doubted there would be many candidates; hence the full value might be expected. Mr. Fox opposed the bill, as tending to enlarge the number of collectors very considerably, and in the same proportion to increase the influence of the crown: it was, besides, argued against the proposed mode of taxation, that it was repugnant to the principles of our constitution, and to the general system of our revenue; and was the mode adopted under arbitrary governments, and one of the principal sources of oppression in France: the precedent was in the highest degree alarming, and required to be warmly resisted in the outset. To these objections the minister and his friends replied, that although farmers of the revenue contributed, under arbitrary governments, very greatly to the miseries of the people, yet it was not from the nature of their employment, but from the system under which it was exercised. The powers to

[1] Mr. Burke, who rose immediately after the minister, professed that it did not become him, or those who like him unfortunately felt it to be frequently their duty to oppose the measures of government, to content themselves with a sullen acquiescence; but on the contrary to rise manfully and do justice to the measure, and to return their thanks to its author, on behalf of themselves and their country. See Parliamentary Debates, 1787.

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be given to the farmer, were no greater than those at present entrusted to collectors: after considerable discussion, the bill passed both houses without a division.

Application of the dissenters for a repeal of the test act.

A SUBJECT was introduced into the house of commons, which became repeatedly the object of its consideration in succeeding sessions: this was a proposition for the repeal of the test and corporation acts. The dissenters from the church of England were very considerable, both in number and opulence; and certain classes of them derived great lustre from the learning and genius of their leaders. Among them there were not a few active, bold, and aspiring men; these very naturally wished to enjoy the sweets of power, to rise to a political superiority over those to whom they might fancy themselves intellectually superior. Among sectarians, the influence of their ministers is generally greater than under an establishment. The relation between the dissenting pastor and his flock is voluntary; whereas between a clergyman and parishioners it is created by the law of the land. The former has, from his situation, dependent on the liberality of his employers, the strongest motives of interest to accommodate himself to their passions, prejudices, and humours[m]; because, if he thwart these, the proceeds of his labours will be much diminished. The latter, being independent of the bounty of those whom the constitution of the country has delegated to his spiritual care, has no interested motive to gratify his parishioners, any farther than is consistent with wisdom and virtue. The sectarian minister, like a tradesman, depends for subsistence on his customers[n]; and the sure way of increasing the number of those is obsequiousness[o]. The beneficed clergyman,

[m] See Hume, vol. iv. 29. preftory to the history of the reformation.

[n] Ibid. 31.

[o] The reader will observe, that here I merely describe the general tendency of situation to influence conduct.

as

as a gentleman, may cultivate the good will of his people, and the friendship of the most deserving; but in paying his court need not stoop beneath a dignified equality. Sectarians also are infinitely more addicted to theological disputations than members of an established church. The zealous agitators of controversy naturally regard with much veneration the chief professor of their tenets. From these causes, the influence of dissenting preachers over their employers was and must have been very great. It certainly then was very easy for them to render the people zealous and eager to procure privileges so gratifying to human passions, nor were they actually wanting in attempts to pre-dispose the public in their favour. Many of their preachers were literary undertakers, who would write on any or every subject. Doctors Price, Priestley, and some others, furnished ideas, which, by the assistance of dilation, repetition, and prolixity, sent to the world numberless books and pamphlets on the severe policy of the British constitution, which, in its allotment of offices, had required certain standards of qualification and disposition to discharge the respective duties. There were circumstances which they conceived favourable to the attainment of their object. The dissenters had coincided with the majority of the established church, in supporting the minister of the crown and people against the leader of a confederacy; thence they inferred, that *gratitude* would induce him to support a cause, in the discussion of which he was to be one of the JUDGES; that Mr. Pitt was to be guided by private affection in deliberating on a question of public expediency. The minister was on terms of friendly intercourse with various dissenters, especially Mr. Beaufoy; this consideration, they apprehended, would have great weight in determining the part which he, as a LAWGIVER, was to act. Mr. Fox, from his general eagerness to diminish restraints, had often professsed, and uniformly

Dissenters favourable to Mr. Pitt, and thence expect his support.

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formly manifested, disapprobation of tests and subscriptions: it was not doubted he would be friendly to the project; the whole dissenting interest, supported by the leaders of the two parties, would, they trusted, produce the desired repeal.

Previous steps to prepossess the public in their favour.

DELEGATES were appointed to arrange and conduct their plans; these did not directly petition parliament, but first published and dispersed a paper, which they called "the case of the protestant dissenters, with reference to the test and corporation acts.[p]" This treatise exhibited the history of the corporation and test acts; the hardships to which conscientious dissenters were exposed by those restrictory statutes; and endeavoured to demonstrate both the justice and expediency of affording them effectual relief. When this representation explained to the public their apprehension of the predicament in which they stood, the dissenters engaged Mr. Beaufoy to move, that the house should resolve itself into a committee to consider those acts.

Mr. Beaufoy pleads their cause in parliament.

In introducing this subject, on the 28th of March, the senator in the first place, stated, what were the exceptionable provisions of the law; and in the next, the peculiar period and circumstances of its enactment. The test act required of every person accepting a civil office, or a commission in the army or navy, to take the sacrament within a limited time; and if, without qualifying himself, he continued to occupy any office, or hold any commission, he not only incurred a large pecuniary penalty, but was disabled thenceforth for ever from bringing any action in course of law; from prosecuting a suit in the courts of equity; from being the guardian of a child, or the executor of a deceased person, and receiving any legacy. On the second head, he recapitulated the history of the act, and the noted though despicable artifice by which

[p] See Domestic Literature in the New Annual Review for 1787.

Charles II. defeated its repeal. He farther endeavoured to prove, that the dissenters had always been favourable to the present happy establishment, and that their general conduct had been such as to entitle them to the gratitude and regard of every true patriot. Lord North, who had been lately deprived of the organs of sight, and thereby prevented from regular and constant attendance in parliament, came that day forward to defend the church from apprehended encroachment. His lordship, educated at Oxford, and impressed with the sentiments which that university has uniformly inculcated, was a strenous supporter of episcopal doctrines. Though too benevolent in disposition and mild in temper for bigotry, he was the warm friend of the rights and privileges of the ecclesiastical establishment, and had always opposed the dissenters when applying for a change. He now declared himself, though attached to the church, the sincere friend of religious liberty. Far should he be from opposing the present motion, if it sought no more than the free and entire exercise of the rights of conscience; but it prayed for the repeal of an act, which was the great bulwark of the constitution, and to which we owed the inestimable blessings of freedom; and recommended a proceeding contrary to the happy experience of a century. It had been said, that the test act was an indignity to the dissenters: but had we not resolved, that no monarch should sit on the throne who refused to comply with the test? If the throne were offered to any prince, who, from motives of conscience, declined this condition, surely the refusal of the throne to that prince would be no indignity. There was no complaint of ecclesiastical tyranny; universal toleration was established; let them therefore guard against change in the church, nor confound the free exercise of religion with admissibility

Lord North, a moderate tory, opposes the application, as inimical to the church.

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Mr. Pitt opposes it, on the grounds of political expediency.

missibility to civil and military appointments. Mr. Pitt, supported the same side of the question; and began by marking the difference between civil and religious liberty on the one hand, and political trusts on the other. The former, every good constitution of government must secure to all its subjects; the latter was bestowed with discrimination, according to individual qualification and disposition, of which the community had the right of judging by any rule that it thought expedient. The test was merely the condition required by the employer from persons to whom he committed a trust. Every master had an unquestionable right to declare the conditions in which he would admit service; and none could be aggrieved by an exclusion arising from himself. The present, therefore, was not a question of grievance and redress, but simply of policy. On this question legislation had only one subject of deliberation, was it expedient, in the present circumstances, sentiments, and principles of the dissenters, for the nation to employ them in certain specified offices? To such an enquiry, every recapitulation of former history was extraneous: a repeal might have been wise in the time of Charles II., and unwise in the reign of George III. The dissenters were, undoubtedly, a body of men, who were entitled to the consideration of parliament; but there was another class equally respectable, and more numerous, whose fears on this occasion would be alarmed. Many members of the church of England conceived, that the ecclesiastical part of our constitution would be seriously injured, and their apprehensions were not to be treated lightly. If he were arguing on principles of right, he should not talk of alarm; but he had already said, he was arguing upon principles of expediency. The church and state were united upon principles of expediency; and it concerned those, to whom the well-being of the state was entrusted, to take care that the church should

The test no infringment of toleration; merely a condition.

Of admissibiljty to certain offices.

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not rashly be demolished. The persons who now applied, declared, that they meant nothing political by their application; but he must look at human actions to find out the springs. Highly as he thought of many of the present dissenters, he could not but observe there were persons among them, who would not admit that any establishment was necessary; and against such it became the legislature to be upon their guard. Doctor Priestley, whose abilities and learning were very high, and whose opinions were received as oracles by a certain class of dissenters, had proclaimed enmity against the church. Sectarians (he said) were wisely placing as it were, grain by grain, a train of gunpowder, to which the match would one day be laid to blow up the fabric of error, which could never be again raised upon the same foundation. When he saw proceedings, intended to subvert so important a part of our polity, he thought circumspection and vigilance absolutely necessary: when there was an avowed design to sap the fortress, it became the duty of the garrison to secure the outposts: the dissenters already enjoyed every mental freedom to serve God, according to their consciences, in the most ample degree: what they now required, was inexpedient and dangerous. These sentiments deeply impressed the house; and on a division, the proposition of Mr. Beaufoy was negatived by a majority of one hundred and seventy-eight to one hundred.

Eminent dissenters avowed themselves hostile to the church, therefore not expedient to extend their power.

The application is rejected.

Soon after this application, a bill was introduced for granting indulgence to a different species of complainants; these were insolvent debtors. The vast increase of commerce poured opulence on the nation; but to many individuals, unavoidable losses or injudicious speculations, brought bankruptcy and ruin. Luxury, growing with commerce and riches, spread its influence over society; the immense fortunes that were acquired by extortion and peculation

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tion in the East, and during the American war, through the prodigal effusion of the public money, stock-jobbing, and other causes, operated upon the minds of many traders, and inspired them with a desire of rapid accumulation. This spirit suggested various schemes, which being much more extensive than the capital that could be employed, failure produced certain ruin. Gaming of every kind was extremely prevalent: the example of some very eminent characters, combining with their winning and impressive manners, infected their intimate associates with this particular vice, and with general extravagance; and that consequence extended itself to many of their political supporters. The metropolis teemed with gambling tradesmen; these became strenuous politicians, who wished to have a share in directing the business of the nation, and that they might deliberate in the tavern, they neglected their shops; imitating those whom they admired, they followed them to their private pastimes; and closed their exertions in the King's Bench or Fleet prisons; and the number of imprisoned debtors, through either misfortune or vice, was extremely great. There can be no wise and just reason for confining a debtor, but to compel payment; if there be no property concealed, confinement of the debtor cannot restore the creditor's right: were it practicable to compel, in every case, the debtor to give up his effects to the creditor, as from effects not person his reimbursement must proceed, imprisonment[r] might appear no longer to answer any just purpose

[r] Mr. Burke delivered the following opinion on this important subject, in his address to the electors of Bristol:—"There are two capital faults in our law, with relation to civil debts. One is, that every man is presumed solvent; a presumption, in innumerable cases, directly against truth; therefore the debtor is ordered, on a supposition of ability and fraud, to be coërced his liberty until he makes payment. By this means, in all cases of civil insolvency, without a pardon from his creditors, he is to be imprisoned for life; and thus a miserable mistaken invention of artificial science operates to change a civil into a criminal judgment, and to scourge misfortune or indiscretion with a punishment which the law does not inflict on very great crimes. The next fault is, that the inflicting of that punishment is not on the opinion

purpose to the creditor. The laws of imprisonment for debt were, by many of the most enlightened men, deemed a great blemish in the legislative code of the country. Cautious, however, not hastily to innovate, lawgivers, instead of changing the principle had endeavoured to lessen the severity of the operation by temporary expedients. One of these was by insolvent acts, which have been usually passed at periods of various distance, when the prisons of the kingdom were so *full*, as to be supposed to render them absolutely necessary. The last of these had been passed in the year 1780, and bills of this kind had been repeatedly proposed, but negatived. This year a proposition to a similar effect was made in the house of lords; the chief supporters were lord Kinnaird, the earl of Hopetoun, the duke of Norfolk [s], but above all lord Rawdon. This accomplished nobleman we have already seen [t] distinguished as a soldier; equally excelling in the arts of peace, he was now become eminent as a member of the senate. With his many other virtues, remarkable for humanity, he directed his attention to the alleviation of misery: his lordship supported the liberation of insolvent debtors, both on the ground of mercy and political expediency. Do not confine debtors, (he said) to gratify the resentment of creditors! Do not, because one individual is malignant, suffer another to be miserable! By confining insolvent debtors, you prevent

Bill for the relief of insolvent debtors.

Enlightened and liberal policy of lord Rawdon.

opinion of an equal and a public judge; but is referred to the arbitrary discretion of a private, nay interested and irritated, individual. He who formally is, and substantially ought to be, the judge, is, in reality no more than ministerial, a mere executive instrument of a private man, who is at once judge and party: every idea of judicial order is subverted by this procedure. If the insolvency be no crime; why is it punished with arbitrary imprisonment? If it be a crime, why is it delivered into private hands to pardon without discretion, or to punish without mercy and without measure?"

[s] This nobleman, hitherto mentioned in the history as the earl of Surry, had, about a year before, succeeded to the dukedom by the death of his father. The present duke is the first protestant representative of the family.

[t] See this volume, *passim*.

them

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them from benefiting themselves, their families, and the community; and you deprive them of every possible means of indemnifying their creditors. Clauses may be introduced, which would relieve misfortune without suffering fraud to escape. Lord Thurlow had been uniformly the chief opposer of the several insolvent bills, and now maintained the same ground. His arguments on the subject have been frequently imputed to a severe unmerciful disposition; but whether conclusive or not, when fairly canvassed, they discover no marks of such a spirit; they manifestly arise from a policy, suggested by an extensive view of a commercial country, and the means of encouraging industry and frugality, and restraining idleness and extravagance: whatever opinion we may form of his reasoning, these were evidently his objects. His lordship, to answer theoretical ingenuity, which expatiated on the miseries that a rigorous creditor might inflict on an innocent though unfortunate debtor, stated a simple and broad fact: English creditors, as a collective body, are distinguished for lenity; to support this assertion he appealed to observation and experience; and affirmed, that lawyers and judges, who, in the exercise of their professions had the most frequent opportunities of knowing the treatment of debtors by creditors, were beyond all others the most deeply impressed with this truth. Lord Mansfield had observed, that for twenty prodigal debtors, there scarcely appeared in the course of law one cruel creditor: the law, as it now stood, discriminated between misfortune and vice: the bankrupt code was instituted for the relief of traders, who failed through unforeseen misfortunes; they were the proper objects of generosity and protection; while, on the other hand, those who ran in debt, knowing that they should never be able to pay, were certainly fit subjects of that severity, which the law, as

it stood, empowered their creditors [a] to exercise; besides, in the last insolvent act, the preamble had declared that it was not likely any more such acts should be passed; and thus in a great measure pledged the public faith to creditors: as he was inimical to the insolvent bill, he said he intended to propose several regulations for mitigating the miseries of imprisoned debtors. This bill was negatived, on a division, by a majority of twenty-three to twelve.

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The bill is negatived.

A QUESTION was this session submitted to the house of lords concerning peers of the kingdom of Scotland who acquired British peerages. During the preceding summer, the earl of Abercorn, and the duke of Queensberry, of the kingdom of Scotland, had been called to the dignity of British peers, by the titles of viscount Hamilton, and baron Douglas; notwithstanding which, they continued to sit as representatives of the peerage of Scotland. Lord Stormont contended, that the right of representation was granted to Scottish peers as a recompence for the loss of an hereditary seat in parliament: those who no longer suffered the loss, could therefore no longer be entitled to a share in the compensation. Having recapitulated the history of the union to illustrate his positions, he moved, that the earl of Abercorn and the duke of Queensbery, who had been chosen in the number of the sixteen peers, having been created peers of Great Britain, thereby ceased to sit in that house as representatives of the peerage of Scotland. His lordship rested his principal argument on a resolution of the house of lords, which was passed in January 1709, that a peer of Scotland, sitting in the parliament of Great Britain, by virtue of a patent passed since the union, had no right to vote in the election of the sixteen peers of Scotland. From this opinion of

Inquiry about Scottish peerages.

[a] Lord Thurlow did not here overturn the objection to a system which makes the party both judge and punisher.

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the house, declaring that such peers could not choose representatives, his lordship inferred, that they could not be representatives themselves. Lord Loughborough supported this constructive interpretation: lord Thurlow, on the contrary, maintained, that a resolution of either house did not constitute the law of the land; and that they ought to abide by that law, according to its literal meaning. Another debate soon after took place on a question nearly connected with this, but to which the resolution of 1709 more directly applied: whether British peers, created since the union, could vote at the election of a Scottish representative: both sides were supported and opposed on the same grounds as in the foregoing case; and both motions were negatived. *

Magnanimous sacrifice by the prince of Wales, of splendor to justice.

A SUBJECT equally interesting and important at this time attracted the public attention, and underwent a discussion in the house of commons. The prince of Wales, amiable, engaging, and accomplished, with a vigorous understanding, possessed strong affections, and was not without that disposition to pleasure which so often accompanies the sensibility and animation of youth, especially in such rank and circumstances as easily afford the objects of pursuit and the means of attainment. Attached to the fair sex, the manly beauty of his face and person, apart from his other advantages, procured him, in the susceptible hearts of his countrywomen, incitements, which while it is admitted as a moral proposition that ascetic virtue ought to have resisted, it must be allowed as an historical fact, that such virtue is not very common in young men of twenty-four. Generous by disposition, the prince was munificent in bounty; social and elegant,

* At the election of the earl of Selkirk and lord Kinnaird, to represent the peerage of Scotland, in the room of the duke of Queensberry and the earl of Abercorn, the dukes of Queensberry and Gordon had given their votes as peers of Scotland.

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he was sumptuous in hospitality: much connected with the chief characters of opposition, he partook of amusements, which constituted the favourite recreation of some of the most illustrious men of the party. The effect of so great an additional source of expenditure to his convivial splendor and expanded generosity, was, that his income did not prove sufficient, and that he had before summer 1786 incurred a very considerable debt. Finding himself in such circumstances, and desirous of rendering justice to his creditors, his highness resolved to suppress the establishment of his household and every useless expence, and to save from his income its greater portion, to be applied by trustees for the liquidation of his incumbrances. He had hitherto, like many other persons of rank and fortune, trained running horses for Newmarket, and the other places of public contention. His racers, his hunters, and even his coach-horses, were now sold by public auction. The buildings of Carlton-house were stopped, and some of the principal rooms shut up from use; and the heir of the crown retired from the magnificence of his station to do justice to his creditors. This conduct in itself did the highest honour to the sentiments and rectitude of the prince; but a consideration totally irrelative, entered into the estimate which many formed of its merits. His highness had in the several objects of his attachment, displayed a discriminating selection, which required the union of mental qualifications with corporeal graces. The lady who at this time occupied the principal share of his attention, was Mrs. Fitzherbert; a woman who, besides the charms and fascinations of beauty and accomplishments, possessed a very respectable character: from this last circumstance a report originated, that greatly interested the public: one relation being presumed, was justified on the part of the lady by the presumption of another. It was currently reported, that the ceremony

Situation of his highness.

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mony of marriage between Mrs. Fitzherbert and her lover had been privately performed; and as she was of the Roman catholic persuasion, that the officiating clergyman was a priest of her own religion. As a legal contract, no such marriage could have been concluded, according to the written statutes which regard the royal family; as a matter of fact, such a ceremony might have been performed, but the belief that it actually took place, was totally inconsistent with a just and candid estimation of the prince's character: it proceeded on one of two suppositions; either that he disregarded his own particular station, under its constitutional limits and prescriptions, and the recent laws enacted respecting the royal family, or that he had consented to an appearance which he well knew could not be valid; and thus practised deception on the other party. Improbable as the report was in its subject, and totally unsupported by any evidence, nevertheless it was very prevalent, and created considerable alarm. The prince's friends had expected an interference from a still higher quarter to extricate him from his pecuniary difficulties. Finding no measure of this kind in agitation, and from other incidents inferring disapprobation on the part of the father, many imputed the apprehended coldness to dissatisfaction with certain portions of the son's conduct, especially his close connexion with that party which opposed the ministers of his majesty's choice, who had been appointed under so very peculiar circumstances; and not a few attributed some share of the alleged displeasure to the abovementioned report. From July 1786 to April 1787, these topics continued greatly to engross the thoughts and conversation of the public; but had not been deemed fit subjects for parliamentary consideration. His highness now authorized Mr. Alderman Newnham to represent to the house of commons his embarrassed situation. On the 20th of April that gentleman

gentleman opened the business: he previously asked Mr. Pitt, if he had any design of bringing forward a motion for the relief of the prince; and being answered that he had received no commands from the king on the subject, the alderman gave notice, that, on the 24th of May, he should make a motion to that effect. This intimation excited much anxiety in the house, as it seemed to lead to such interesting discussions. Mr. Newnham, on one of the intervening days, explained the precise nature of his motion; which was to address the king, praying him to take into his consideration the derangement of the prince's affairs; and to grant him such relief as his wisdom should deem expedient and suitable; and pledging the house to make good the same. Mr. Pitt earnestly wished that the motion should not be brought forward: there were circumstances (he said) respecting the pecuniary concerns of the prince, that would render the present proposition inimical to the object of its author: the application ought to originate elsewhere, and not in the house: a correspondence had taken place between the party principally concerned, and another personage, respecting financial embarrassments. Mr. Pitt, with his usual closeness, kept to the subject which was introduced by Mr. Newnham; but some of the most zealous supporters of administration introduced an extraneous topic, in an allusion to the prevailing rumours. Messrs. Fox and Sheridan reprobated the report to which this insinuation referred; and, at the next meeting of the house, Mr. Fox declared he had authority from the prince to contradict the allegation. In law, as Mr. Fox observed, it could not take place; and in fact, Mr. Fox pledged the veracity of his highness that it had not taken place. This public disavowal, at the instance of the heir apparent, afforded very great satisfaction to the whole house. On recurring to his pecuniary situation, Mr. Fox declared, that the prince was willing

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ling to give a general and fair account of his debts; and if any part of it was doubted, he would present a clear explanation of the particulars to the king or his ministers. He had not the smallest objection to afford the house every possible satisfaction; and there was not a circumstance of his life which he was ashamed to have known.

Satisfactorily adjusted.

MEANWHILE, interviews took place between Mr. Dundas and his highness; and the following day between the minister and the prince. Mr. Newnham being made acquainted with the result, on the day on which the motion was intended to be made, declared it was no longer necessary. About a fortnight afterwards, a message from the king was delivered to parliament, stating, that his majesty with great concern acquainted them, that the prince had incurred a very large debt, which, if left to be discharged out of his annual income, would render it impossible for him to support an establishment that would be suited to his rank and station. His majesty was induced to the present application by his paternal affection to the prince of Wales; he could not, however, desire the assistance of parliament, but on a well-grounded conviction that the prince would avoid contracting any debts in future. With a view to this object, the king had directed a sum of 10,000*l.* to be paid out of the civil list, in addition to his former allowance; he had the satisfaction to observe, that the prince had given the fullest assurance of his determination to confine his future expences within his income, and had settled a plan, and fixed an order in his economy, which, it was trusted, would effectually secure the due execution of his intentions. He farther recommended to the commons to direct, that the works of Carlton-house should be properly finished. In answer to this message, 161,000*l.* were voted for the payment of the prince's debts, and 20,000*l.* for the completion of his palace.

THE

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1787. Proceedings respecting Mr. Hastings.

THE conduct of Mr. Hastings continued to occupy the attention of parliament, and produced an extraordinary display of abilities. One charge of great importance had been decided against the late governor-general: the event of the accusation respecting Cheyt Sing, had surprised and alarmed Mr. Hastings and his friends. Many supporters of administration regarded the conduct of the accused in a very favourable light; thence his advocates seem to have inferred, that Mr. Pitt entertained a similar opinion. 'One of the most important qualities of a great minister is, that secrecy which avoids the communication of sentiments or intentions, unless prudence admit or duty require that they should be manifested. This self-command, the firm mind of Mr. Pitt possesses in a very high degree; and no artifice can discover what he resolves to conceal. In the present case he studied the charges separately, and, as became a judge, abstained from publishing his opinion, until he was prepared to deliver judgment. Mr. Hastings, therefore, saw that the vote of the prime minister would depend entirely on the view which he took of the respective charges; and that in cases comprehending probable grounds both of blame and justification, it might be doubtful what his sentence might be on some of the subsequent accusations. The authority, he was aware, of so highly prized talents and integrity, would be great with those who, hesitating between contending probabilities, found a difficulty themselves in forming a decisive opinion. Much more anxiety and doubt now, therefore, displayed themselves in the friends of Mr. Hastings, than when Major Scott, in the exultation of anticipated victory, had so eagerly invited Mr. Burke to the combat. The press teemed with defences of the late governor-general; either the spontaneous effusions of conviction and friendship, or the purchased productions of literary ability: the former were more disinterested

Writings in his favour.

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ested in the motive; the latter more successful in the execution. Some of Mr. Hastings's friends, indeed, very injudiciously, as well as uncandidly, ascribed bad or frivolous motives to the chief men on both sides of the house who voted for the impeachment. They asserted, that Mr. Burke was actuated by resentment; that Messrs. Fox, Sheridan, Windham, Adam, Anstruther, Grey, sir Gilbert Elliot, and other members of opposition, merely wished to gratify Burke, and to attack a man whom they thought favoured by the court and some of the ministers[y]; and that leading men of administration were moved by jealousy of Mr. Hastings's influence. Apprehending those advocates to be convinced, that the person whose cause they so warmly espoused was innocent, and also able to prove his innocence, the impartial reader must deem them extremely imprudent, and indeed unwise, in resting his defence upon extraneous grounds. This imputation was uncandid, because it assigned unjustifiable motives without proof, or even plausible argument. The motive ascribed to the principal accuser was virulent resentment, because a friend of his had not been promoted by Hastings; but the alleged cause is not adequate to the effect. That Mr. Burke, or any man, would undertake so laborious a task, which required such minuteness of investigation concerning intricate details, the materials of which were to be fetched from such a distance, with so great and powerful a body inimical to an inquiry, merely because his friend had been slighted, is hardly within the compass of credibility: the same observations will apply to all the other prosecutors, as far as they were concerned. As to the jealousy of ministers, where can we find the grounds for such a passion in the relative situation of these and of Mr. Hastings? Fully admitting extraordinary

[y] See pamphlets in favour of Mr. Hastings *passim*; also periodical works, especially a newspaper called The World.

talents and also meritorious conduct in the political saviour of India, can a reader discover any official situation which he was likely to fill, that could in the smallest degree interfere with the power and influence of the ministers in question? But the hired pleaders for Mr. Hastings, being much more accustomed to reasoning, defended him on stronger grounds. Instead of forming hypotheses concerning the *motives of the accusers*, they adduced arguments from the CONDUCT OF THE ACCUSED, which, in detailed series, principle and system, they justified by the circumstances in which he was placed, and illustrated by the effects that his exertions produced. These two classes of defenders had each considerable success; the first with the weak and undistinguishing; the second with men of discernment and abilities; and the majority of the nation was inimical to the impeachment.

The majority of the nation is adverse to the impeachment.

SUCH was the state of the public opinion, when one most powerful effort of eloquence diffused quite different sentiments through the kingdom; and presented Mr. Hastings as an atrocious criminal. This was the celebrated speech on the charge of the begums.

Eloquence gives a contrary turn to public opinion.

AN opinion long prevailed among literary men, that though Britons surpass the ancients in knowledge and philosophy; equal them in epic, and excel them in dramatic poetry; yet they are inferior in eloquence. Writers of transcendent talents, distinguished taste, and profound erudition, deem this notion so evident as not to require any discussion: they take the fact for granted, and confine their enquiries to the cause.[z] Great ingenuity is employed in comparing the fields of ancient and modern oratory, and discovering motives that led to much more powerful and impressive exertions among the Greeks and Romans, than any that

British eloquence.

[z] See Hume's Essay on Eloquence: see also Blair's Lectures, lect. xxvi.; and *Man of the Moon*, by Dr. William Thomson.

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influence British speakers: hence (say Hume and Blair) no Demosthenes or Cicero arises in a modern senate. A careful examiner of the eloquence which adorns the parliamentary history of the present reign, may probably doubt the truth of this assertion: he who peruses the orations of the elder or younger Pitt, Burke, or Fox, may hesitate before he will determine that they are surpassed by either Cicero or Demosthenes. It is, indeed, in the supreme excellencies of the Roman or Grecian orator, that they are most nearly equalled by British senators. Like Demosthenes[a], especially, the highest of our orators, are much less eminent for rhetorical flourishes, than for clear and forcible statement of important facts; combination of whatever illustrates the question, or promotes the measure proposed; comprehensive views of the situation, intentions, and interests of the parties concerned; energetic reasoning appropriated to the point at issue; and application of forcible motives to impel hearers to the counsels and conduct which the speaker desires. Eloquence, to be efficacious, must be adapted to the sentiments and knowledge of the persons to whom it is addressed; the same species and mode would not suit informed and enlightened gentlemen of the British house of commons, and the populace which constituted so great a part of the Grecian and Roman assemblies. The same genius and wisdom which enabled and directed Demosthenes to perform such intellectual wonders, empowered and guided him to adapt his oratory to the feelings and capacity of his audience: the acuteness and ingenuity of the Athenian meetings did not admit of much tinsel, instead of sterling value; nevertheless, they were in many respects a mere mob; consequently, there was sometimes

[a] Of British orators Mr. Fox unquestionably bears the nearest resemblance to the Athenian in materials, spirit, and expression; and equals him in force and in fire, but is less attentive to luminous arrangement.

room

room for substituting impression for conviction; addressing their feelings instead of their understandings; their weakness instead of their strength. Demosthenes, in order to carry the most beneficial plans into execution, was often obliged to soothe and cajole them; and for that purpose occasionally to admit into his discourses ornaments, which his own austere, strong, and chaste judgment would have induced him to reprobate. British eloquence is rather unlike to ancient in some of the subordinate instruments [b], than unequal in the combination of strong reasoning, vivid imagery, and pathetic exhibition; which passing through the head affects the heart, and influences the conduct: the operation and result of oratory are no less vigorous and effectual in Britain, than in Rome or Athens. These observations, though somewhat digressive, will not, I trust, be accounted foreign to the subject of our narrative, that now comes to a display of eloquence, which has, perhaps, never been surpassed in ancient or modern times.

[b] That, in point of action, ancient orators far surpass modern, is deemed one of those tritical observations, which it would be equally superfluous to illustrate, as absurd to controvert; a common inference from the allowed superiority of action is greater excellence of oratory; and the noted saying of the Roman is often quoted to prove, that gesticulation is the primary constituent of eloquence. One of the wisest men that has written on that or any other subject, views the importance of action in a different light. "It is (says Dr. Johnson) a complaint which has been made from time to time, and which seems to have lately become more frequent, that *English* oratory, however forcible in argument, or elegant in expression, is deficient and inefficacious, because our speakers want the grace and energy of action. Among the numerous projectors who are desirous to refine our manners, and improve our faculties, some are willing to supply the deficiency of our speakers': we have had more than one exhortation to study the neglected art of moving the passions; and have been encouraged to believe, that our tongues, however feeble in themselves, may, *by the help of our hands and legs*, obtain an uncontrovertible dominion over the most stubborn audience, animate the insensible, engage the careless, force tears from the obdurate, and money from the avaricious. If, by sleight of hand, or nimbleness of foot, all these wonders can be performed, he that shall neglect to attain the free use of his limbs, may be justly censured as criminally lazy: but we are afraid that no specimen of such effects will easily be shewn. If we could once find a speaker in '*Change Alley*, raising the price of stocks by the power of persuasive gestures, we should very zealously recommend the study of his art; but having never seen any action by which language was much assisted, we have been hitherto inclined to doubt whether our countrymen are not blamed too hastily for their calm and motionless utterance." Idler, No. 90.

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1787. Speech of Mr. Sheridan on the conduct of Mr. Hastings towards the begums.

On the 7th of February Mr. Sheridan opened the third article of accusation against Mr. Hastings; which was his conduct towards the begums[c], or dowager princesses of Oude. The introduction attacked a ground of defence chosen by many advocates of Mr. Hastings, that the successful result of his administration amounted to a sufficient justification of his conduct: this principle the speaker reprobated, as contrary to every rule of natural and christian morals, which both taught, in the most unequivocal language, that wicked means were not to be employed for the purpose of accomplishing desirable ends; it was, moreover, a new and base sophism in the maxims of judicial inquiry, that crimes might be compounded, and that fortunate events were a full and complete set-off against oppression, corruption, breach of faith, peculation, and treachery. The conduct of the house of commons, during the preceding year, was guided by the soundest principles of jurisprudence; they had asserted, that there were acts of moral turpitude, which no political necessity could warrant; and proved to the world, that, however degenerate an example some of the British subjects had exhibited in India, the people of England, collectively, speaking and acting by their representatives, felt, as men should feel on such an occasion: they had demonstrated themselves superior to the presumptuous pretensions that were advanced in favour of this pillar of India, this corner-stone of our strength in the East, this talisman of the British territories in Asia, whose character was said to be above censure, and whose conduct was not within the reach of suspicion. After this conciliatory exordium, the orator proceeded to rouse the attention of his hearers, by a concise but striking outline of the nature and magnitude of the subject, which he was about to

[c] See chap. xxix. of this History.

submit

submit to their consideration. The present charge he stated to be replete with criminality of the blackest die, tyranny the most vile and premeditated, corruption the most open and shameless, oppression the most severe and grinding, and cruelty the most hard and unparalleled. He professed to God, that he felt in his own bosom the strongest personal conviction on the present subject. It was upon that conviction that he believed the conduct of Mr. Hastings, in regard to the nabob of Oude, and to the begums, comprehended in it every species of human offence. He had proved himself guilty of rapacity, at once violent and insatiable; of treachery, cool and premeditated; of oppression, useless and unprovoked; of breach of faith, unwarranted and base; of cruelty, unmanly and unmerciful! These were the crimes of which his soul and conscience arraigned Mr. Hastings, and which he trusted he should demonstrate to the satisfaction of every hearer. He was far from meaning to rest the charges upon assertion, or upon the warm expressions which the impulse of wounded feelings might produce: he would establish every part of the accusation by the most unanswerable proof, and the most unquestionable evidence. He would support every fact by a testimony, which few would venture to contradict, that of Mr. Hastings himself. As there were persons ready to stand up advocates for the late governor-general, he challenged these to watch every particle of the accusations which he should advance: he desired credit for no fact which he did not prove beyond the possibility of refutation.

Mr. Hastings had endeavoured to establish, that the treasures of the begums were not private property, but belonged to the nabob; that the real proprietor had a right to reclaim his own property, whenever he chose; and actually had resumed it for the purpose of liquidating his debts to the East India company.

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company. To controvert this assertion he quoted the mohammedan law, and decisions upon that law concerning this very case; the amount was, that women, on the death of their husbands, are entitled only to the property within the zenana or harem where they lived. This opinion had been fully admitted by the council of Calcutta: the begums retained only the treasures which were within the harems, and relinquished every other property to the reigning prince. The British government of India at the time admitted, and even guaranteed the tenure by which the begums held this residue of effects; that property, therefore, was their own, and not the nabob's; it might be plundered, but could not be justly reclaimed. Mr. Hastings, in mitigation of his own severities, misstated the principles of mohammedan law, as if he meant to insinuate, that there was something in the eastern codes which rendered it impious in a son not to plunder his mother. From these arguments, to establish that the property was the right of the begums, and consequently the seizure a violation of rights, the orator proceeded to the reasons which had been adduced for appropriating the treasures of the princesses: here, he rested his inference on the report of the governor-general himself. The begums had at all times given disturbance to the nabob; they had long manifested a spirit hostile to his and to the English government; they had excited the zemindars to revolt; and they were accessary to the insurrection at Benares. Each of these allegations was sufficiently disproved by Mr. Hastings himself; who made it appear, that on the contrary they had particularly distinguished themselves by their friendship with the English, and by the various good offices which they rendered to the government. Mr. Hastings left Calcutta in 1781, and proceeded to Lucknow, as he said himself, with two great objects in his mind, Benares and Oude.

Oude. What was the nature of these boasted resources? They resembled the equitable alternative of a highwayman, who, in going forth in the evening, was held in suspence which of his resources to prefer, Bagshot or Hounslow. In such a state of generous irresolution did Mr. Hastings proceed to Benares and Oude: at Benares he failed in his pecuniary object; then and not till then, not on account of any ancient enmities shewn by the begums; not in resentment for any old disturbances; but because he had failed in one place, and had but two in prospect, did he conceive the base expedient of plundering these aged women. To carry his scheme into execution, Mr. Hastings, said his eloquent accuser, formed the atrocious design of instigating a son against his mother, of sacrificing female dignity and distress to parricide and plunder. At Chunar was that infamous treaty concerted; in which, among other articles, Mr. Hastings had stipulated with one whom he called an independent prince, that, as great distress had arisen to the nabob's government from the military power and dominion assumed by the dowager princesses, he be permitted to re-assume such of their lands as he may deem to be necessary. From the plan, the accuser proceeded to the execution: no sooner was this foundation of inquiry established, in violation of the pledged faith and solemn guarantee of the British government; no sooner had Mr. Hastings determined to invade the substance of equity, than he resolved to avail himself of judicial forms; and accordingly dispatched a messenger for the chief justice of India, to assist him in perpetrating the violations he had projected. Sir Elijah Impey being arrived, Mr. Hastings, with much art, proposed a question of opinion, involving an unsubstantiated fact, in order to obtain a surreptitious approbation of the measure he had predetermined to adopt;—the begums being in actual rebellion, might

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might not the nabob confiscate their property? "Most undoubtedly!" was the ready answer of the friendly judge. Not a syllable of inquiry intervened, as to the existence of the imputed revolt; not a moment's pause as to the ill purposes, to which the decision of a chief justice might be perverted. It was not the office of a friend to mix the grave caution and cold circumspection of a judge, with an opinion taken in such circumstances; and sir Elijah had previously declared, that he gave his advice, not as a judge, but as a friend; a character which he equally preferred in the strange office that he undertook, of collecting justificatory affidavits on the subject of Benares. It is (said the orator) curious to reflect on the whole of sir Elijah's circuit at that perilous time: he stated his desire of relaxing from the fatigues of office, and unbending his mind in a party of health and pleasure; yet, wisely apprehending that too sudden relaxation might defeat its object, he contrived to mix some concerns of business with his amusements. In his little airing of nine hundred miles, great part of which he travelled post, escorted by an army, he selected those very situations where insurrection subsisted, and rebellion was threatened; and had not only delivered his deep and curious researches into the laws of nations and treaties, in the capacity of the oriental Grotius, whom Mr. Hastings was to study, but also appeared in the humbler and more practical situation of a collector of *ex parte* evidence: in the former quality his opinion was the premature sanction for plundering the begums; in the latter character he became the posthumous supporter of the expulsion and pillage of the rajah Cheyt Sing. Acting on an unproved fact, on a position as ideal as a *datum* of the duke of Richmond, he did not hesitate, in the first instance, to lend his authority to an unlimited persecution; in the latter, he

he did not disdain to scud about India, like an itinerant informer, with a pedlar's pack of garbled evidence and surreptitious affidavits. With a generous oblivion of duty and honour, with a proud sense of having authorized all future rapacity, and sanctioned all past oppression, this friendly judge proceeded on his circuit of health and ease: while the governor-general issued his orders to plunder the begums of their treasure, sir Elijah pursued his progress, and explored a country, that presented a speaking picture of hunger and nakedness, in quest of objects best suited to his feelings; in anxious search of calamities most akin to his invalid imagination: thus, at the same moment that the sword of government was turned to an assassin's dagger, the pure ermine of justice was stained and soiled with the basest contamination. Such were the circumstances, under which Mr. Hastings completed the treaty of Chunar; a treaty which may challenge all the treaties that ever existed, for containing in the smallest compass the most extensive treachery. An apology adduced by Mr. Hastings for his conduct is, that the begums resisted the resumption of the Jaghires: the amount of this charge is, that these poor old women attempted to prevent robbery. Could any thing be more absurd, than to accuse persons of endeavouring to preserve their property from plunder? But the fact is, they made no resistance; they well knew that their feeble efforts could not restrain the force of the plunderer: but Mr. Hastings farther added, the begums complained that they had suffered injustice. "God of heaven! had they not a right to complain? After the violation of a solemn treaty, plundered of their property, and on the eve of the last extremity of misery, were they to be deprived of the ultimate resource of impotent wretchedness, lamentation and regret? Was it a crime that they should crowd together in fluttering trepidation, like

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like a flock of helpless birds, on seeing the felon kite, who, having darted at one devoted victim and missed his aim, singled out a new object, and was springing on his prey with redoubled vigour in his wing, and keener vengeance in his eye?" After the eloquence of Sheridan had exhibited such a view of the acts of the accused, he proceeded to his general character. "It has (he said) been advanced by admirers of Mr. Hastings, who are not so implicit as to give unqualified applause to his crimes, that they found an apology for their atrocity in the greatness of his mind. To estimate the solidity of such a defence, it is sufficient to consider wherein this prepossessing distinction, this captivating characteristic consists: is it not solely to be traced in great actions directed to great ends? In them only are we to search for true magnanimity; to them only can we affix the splendor and the honours of true greatness. There is, indeed, another species of greatness, which displays itself in boldly conceiving a bad measure, and undauntedly pursuing it to its accomplishment. Had Mr. Hastings the merit of exhibiting either of these? There was nothing great, nothing magnanimous, nothing open, nothing direct, in his measures or his mind: on the contrary, he pursued the worst objects by the worst means; his course was an eternal deviation from rectitude: at one time he tyrannized over the will, and at another time deluded the understanding; he was by turns a Dionysius and a Scapin: as well might the writhing obliquity of the serpent be compared to the direct path of the arrow, as the duplicity of Mr. Hastings's ambition to the simple steadiness of genuine magnanimity; in his mind all was shuffling, ambiguous, dark, insidious, and little; nothing simple, nothing unmixed; all affected plainness and actual dissimulation: he was an heterogeneous mass of contradictory qualities, with nothing great but his crimes, and

and those contrasted by the littleness of his motives; which at once denoted his profligacy and his meanness, and marked him for a traitor and a juggler: in his very style of writing there was the same mixture of vicious contrarieties: the most grovelling ideas he conveyed in the most inflated language; giving mock consequence to low cavils, and uttering quibbles in heroics; so that his compositions disgust the taste of the understanding, as much as his actions excite the abhorrence of the soul. The same character pervaded every department of his government; alike in the military and the political line, we may observe auctioneering ambassadors, and trading generals: we saw a revolution brought about by an affidavit; an army employed in executing an arrest; a town besieged on a note of hand; and a prince dethroned for the balance of an account. Thus a government was exhibited, uniting the mock majesty of a bloody sceptre, and the little traffic of a merchant's counting-house; wielding a truncheon with one hand, and picking a pocket with the other." This energetic, grand, and splendid display of eloquence was closed by the following peroration: "Factions exist in this house, and there is scarcely a subject on which we are not broken and divided into sects; habits, connexions, parties, all lead to diversity of opinion: but when inhumanity presents itself to our observation, it finds no division in the representatives of the British people; we attack it as our common enemy; and conceiving that the character of the country is involved, in our zeal for the destruction of cruelty, we quit not our undertaking till it be completely overthrown. It is not allowed to this assembly to behold the objects of our compassion and benevolence in the present extensive inquiry: we cannot contemplate the workings of their hearts, the quivering lips, the trickling tears, the loud yet tremulous joys of the millions, whom our vote of this

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night will for ever save from the cruelty of corrupted power: but, though we cannot directly see the effect, is not the true enjoyment of our benevolence increased, by its being conferred unseen? Will not the omnipotence of Britain be demonstrated to the wonder of nations, by stretching its mighty arm across the deep, and saving by its fiat distant millions from destruction? And will the blessings of the people dissipate in the empty air; No. If I may dare use the figure, they will constitute heaven itself their proxy, to receive for them the blessings of their pious thanksgiving, and the prayers their gratitude will dictate!"

Such is the outline and chief substance of this celebrated speech, whose delivery occupied the extraordinary length of five hours and a half; during which its excellence was uniform in vivid, animated, and fervid description of conduct, that excited the various emotions of the human heart; for the alleged sufferers, and against the alleged tyrant: filled the hearers with contempt and scorn against exhibited meanness, detestation of represented atrocity, and called their vengeance upon powerful guilt overwhelming helpless innocence. Never was Mr. Sheridan surpassed by any orator in brilliant and irresistible eloquence, nor has he often been equalled in ingenuity and acuteness of deduction from the premises which he assumed. If the governor-general had acted in the mode, and from the motives represented with so impressive effect by Mr. Sheridan, he would have certainly deserved to have been ranked among all the Caligulas, Neros;

[a] The late Mr. Logan, well known for his literary efforts, and author of a most masterly defence of Mr. Hastings, went that day to the house of commons, prepossessed for the accused and against his accuser. At the expiration of the first hour he said to a friend, "All this is declamatory assertion without proof:" when the second was finished; "This is a most wonderful oration;" at the close of the third: "Mr. Hastings has acted very unjustifiably:" the fourth; "Mr. Hastings is a most atrocious criminal:" and at last; "Of all monsters of iniquity, the most enormous is Warren Hastings!" This I was told by Mr. Peter Stewart, proprietor of the Oracle, who was present.

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and Caracallas, that had ever scourged humanity by lawless power; with all the Jonathan Wilds and Scapins, that, by fraud and imposture, supplied the want of force to perpetrate villainy. The speech so manifestly astonished the house, that Mr. Pitt proposed to adjourn their meeting without coming to a deliberation, until they should be sufficiently recovered to distinguish the blaze of eloquence from the light of truth: throughout the country the impression was little less powerful; and great numbers conceived Hastings as *guilty* as he was represented by transcendent genius. To the commons there appeared so probable grounds of accusation, as to produce a vote of one hundred and seventy-five to sixty-eight, for impeaching Mr. Hastings upon the third charge: several other inferior charges were voted to contain grounds of *impeachment*. On the 2d of April various other accusations were examined, and the impeachment was at length voted; when the form in which that inquest should be carried on, became a subject of consideration. Mr. Fox proposed, that there should be a general charge of impeachment, and that the house, on acquainting the lords with their intention, should inform them that they were preparing articles which they would present with all convenient dispatch; reserving to themselves the constitutional rights of supplying more heads, after they had gone through the whole. Mr. Pitt proposed they should separate and analyze the charges, since the accusation consisted of a diffuse and complicated mass; of many allegations which had not been substantiated, and of many facts which could not be considered as criminal; that thus each part should be tried by its distinct and individual merits. Mr. Burke and Mr. Sheridan coincided with the minister; and his plan was adopted. Mr. Hastings now made, through Major Scott, an application to the house, that if they resolved there was ground for impeach-

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Its effects on the house of commons and the public.

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ment, they would vote that he should be brought to trial: he trusted that the house of commons would not suffer his name to be branded upon their records, without allowing him at the same time the only legal means of effacing the stigma.

A COMMITTEE was formed to prepare articles of impeachment against Warren Hastings, esq. and empowered to send for persons, papers, and records. The committee consisted of Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Pelham, sir James Erskine, Mr. Windham, Mr. St. John, Mr. Francis, sir Gilbert Elliot, sir Grey Cooper, Mr. Frederic Montague, Mr. Wellbore Ellis, general Burgoyne, colonel North, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Grey, Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Adam, Mr. Dudley Long, and lord Maitland.

The commons impeach Warren Hastings at the bar of the house of peers.

ON the 20th of May, Mr. Edmund Burke went in the name of the house of commons, and of all the commons of Great Britain,* to the bar of the house of lords, and impeached Mr. Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors; and acquainted the lords, that the commons would, with all convenient speed, exhibit articles against him, and make good the same. The articles were eight in number, the charge of Cheyt Sing, the begums, charges of Farruckahad, the contracts, Fizulla Khan, the presents, the revenues, and misdemeanors in Oude. At the instance of Mr. Burke, Mr. Hastings was taken into custody by the sergeant at arms; and being immediately conducted to the bar of the house of lords, was delivered to the gentleman usher of the black rod. Upon the motion of the lord chancellor, he was admitted to bail, himself in 20,000 *l.* and two sureties, Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Sumner, in 10,000 *l.* each, and was ordered to deliver in an answer to the articles of impeachment in one month from that time, or upon the second day of the next session of parliament.

* See Annual Register for 1787; British and Foreign history, p. 148.

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1787. Supplies.

On the 20th of April the financial accounts and arrangements of the year were brought forward. The minister opened the subject, by testifying the high satisfaction that he felt, and which he doubted not the house would share, when he laid before them such an account of our finances, as would justify his former statements, reasonings, and predictions. The public services were to be provided for without additional imposts, although a very bad season in the West Indies had caused a defalcation in the customs to the amount of 350,000*l.*

Favourable state of the finances.

On the 7th of May, Mr. Dundas, as president of the board of controul, brought forward the financial state of British India. He conceived it (he said) highly improper that any part of the empire should be in the receipt of a revenue of five millions, and maintain an army of seventy or eighty thousand men, without its being known to the house of commons how that revenue was disbursed, and why such an establishment was supported. The debt in India amounted to nine millions, the revenue of the last year afforded a surplus of 1,800,000*l.*, and the company would be able to discharge their debt in this country in the year 1790. Having clearly and concisely stated these facts and opinions, Mr. Dundas moved resolutions respecting the revenues of India; these were carried without a division.

Mr. Dundas brings forward the financial state of British India.

On the 30th of May his majesty prorogued parliament with a speech, expressing his entire approbation of the zeal and assiduity with which the houses applied themselves to the important objects recommended to their attention at the commencement of the session, and returning his majesty's particular thanks for the proofs which they had given of affection for his person, family, and government. Satisfied as he was with the assurances which he received of the continuance, among foreign powers, of general tranquillity, he greatly regretted the internal dissensions among the states of the united

Promising aspect of affairs.

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provinces. He rejoiced at the progress made in the reduction of the national debt; and at the measures adopted by Parliament for carrying into effect the commercial treaty with France, and for simplifying the revenue; he trusted the same patriotic dispositions would be exerted in their several counties, in promoting industry and good order; the surest sources of private and public prosperity.

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Affairs of Holland. — Ruinous effects of the war with Britain. — Complaints against the Stadtholder. — Charge concerning the inaction of the fleets. — Objects of the aristocratic party at the end of the war. — They put arms into the hands of the multitude. — Effects of this measure. — Beginning of a democratic party. — Both the aristocratic and democratic parties agree in hostility to the house of Orange. — Advantages which they possessed over the Stadtholderian party. — They are supported by the monied men — and sectaries. — Circumstances favourable to the prince. — He is commander of the army and fleet. — Civil power and authority. — He is governor-general of the East and West India companies. — His hereditary possessions. — Several provinces favourable to his cause. — Friendship and affinity with Prussia. — Adverse faction trusts to the protection of France. — They deprive the prince of the command of the Hague. — The Orange family leave the Hague. — Temperate remonstrances of Prussia — disregarded by the faction, — who absolve the troops from their oath of fidelity. — Meeting of the States of Holland and West Friezeland, — violence of. — Remonstrance of the prince. — Frederic William sends his prime minister as ambassador to the States of Holland. — Firm memorial of. — Conduct of France, — encourages the faction. — Rebellion commences at Hattem. — The insurgents are defeated. — Conciliatory interposition of Prussia — and of Britain — unavailing. — Joint mediation of Prussia and France. — Different views of these powers. — Alarming power of the democratic party — is exerted in levelling innovation — defeated in an attempt to suspend the office of Stadtholder. — They try a new fabrication of votes. — The armed burghers are employed as instruments of revolution. — Fury of a revolutionary mob. — The States General avow themselves supporters of the constitution. — Disorders at Amsterdam — The army continues attached to the prince. — The faction becomes desperate. — Arrest of the princess on her way to the Hague. — She is compelled to return. — On this insult the king of Prussia changes his tone. — He demands satisfaction of the States of Holland —

which is not granted. — He determines on force. — The revolutionists rely on France. — The duke of Brunswick enters the United Provinces at the head of an army. — The revolutionists apply to France for aid. — Conduct of Britain. — The king of France intimates an intention of assisting the States of Holland. — Our king declares he will forcibly oppose such interference, — and prepares an armament. — France relinquishes her design, — and the duke of Brunswick is completely victorious. — Restoration of the Stadtholder. — Great and unanimous praises of the British cabinet.

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1787. Affairs of Holland.

THE most important events of the summer regarded the United Provinces. Their unfortunate war with Britain, and its ruinous consequences, had shaken the republic to its foundation, occasioned a departure from many of its ancient maxims and principles; and not only strengthened the old party which was friendly to France, but made way for the rise of a new faction, much more dangerous and destructive. The known averseness of the stadtholder to connexion with the house of Bourbon and the American colonies, his near relation and believed attachment to the British sovereign, afforded grounds for suspicion, that he could not engage very heartily in a cause so directly opposite to opinions in which he had been nurtured. The disgraceful and ruinous consequences of the war, the immense losses sustained by the capture of St. Eustatius, with other severe blows, as well on the seas as in both the Indies, which the republic had received during that ill sought and unfortunate conflict, not only disappointed the views of the supporters of the French interest, but produced great discontent among many other individuals, who did not originally belong to that party; and they imputed to the backwardness of the stadtholder, losses which proceeded from their own folly in courting a war with England. They commenced hostilities unwisely

Ruinous effects of the war with Britain.

wisely and unjustly, when they had so much valuable merchandize, either on sea or in their factories, exposed to an enemy, who, notwithstanding every opposition, still retained the command of the ocean; and were enraged that the stadtholder did not perform impossibilities, by saving them from the consequences of their iniquitous impolicy. The charges against the stadtholder were chiefly general: it was said, that he had not exerted the force with which he was entrusted by the state, in that manner, or with that energy which he might have employed, and which would have been most effectual for counteracting the designs and frustrating the efforts of the enemy. On these points, the prince in vain repeatedly challenged his adversaries to the inquiry and proof; but, aware of the futility of their charges, they did not wish for investigation. One specific object of examination was, why the Dutch fleet did not proceed to Brest according to compact, in the year 1782, that the whole combined naval force of the house of Bourbon and Holland might have descended at once on the coasts of Britain. The failure had been loudly attributed to criminal neglect, if not treachery; and a committee was speedily appointed to inquire into the causes: the result was, no discovery was made tending in the smallest degree to affect the stadtholder.

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Complaints against the stadtholder.

Charge concerning the inaction of the fleet.

At the termination of the American war, no ideas of democratic liberty, or of the admission of the whole people into a share of the government, appear to have been entertained by the party in opposition to the stadtholder: their design was to strengthen the aristocracies, and to place the government in the hands of an oligarchy, composed of their own principal leaders, who would likewise be self-elected and perpetual; and who, not subject to the jealousy attendant on the sway of a single person, in the nature of things would soon

Objects of the aristocratic party at the end of the war.

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soon assume a decisive authority, which had never been possessed by the stadtholderate. The contest with the emperor afforded a pretext for a measure, which the aristocratic faction intended for strengthening their power, but eventually produced the total dissolution of their authority; this was, the bestowal of arms on the multitude: the people finding arms in their hands, began at once to feel their own importance; they awakened, as it were, from a dead sleep, and wondered why they held no share in that government which they were called upon to defend or support, and which it was evident without them could have no permanent security. The examples of Ireland and America were fresh before them; the very term of volunteers, which they assumed, contributed to stamp the character of the part they were to act. The democratic spirit being thus suddenly brought to life, felt the possession of its faculties, and displayed all the vigour, and perhaps, even the wantonness of youth. The armed burghers had been designed as a counterpoise to the army, which was known to be generally attached to the stadtholder; and it was fondly expected, that when they had performed the service, they would have silently sunk into their former insignificance; but, without waiting for that issue, they began to account themselves constituent members of the commonwealth, and demanded to be admitted to a share in the legislation and government of their respective cities, by electing delegates, who were to be received as their legal representatives in the public assemblies, and thus form a popular counterpoise to the aristocratic power. When these sentiments were avowed, nothing could exceed the surprise and consternation which they excited. The principal leaders of the faction were disconcerted and alarmed; they had improvidently raised a dangerous spirit,

They put arms into the hands of the multitude.

Effects of this measure.

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and brought a new power into action, without a due consideration of the force and eccentricity of its movements; and these were evidently beyond their control or management. This new body they saw would prove equally inimical to the aristocratical, as to the stadtholderian authority; but afraid, if they should then oppose the pretensions of the democratical party, that a powerful body would go over to the Orange adherents, and both united put an end to the sway of the nobles, they temporised, and appeared to coincide with the plebeian combination. CHAP. XXXVIII. 1787. Beginning of a democratic party.

THIS union of two parties, of adverse interests, but concurring in desire to humiliate the stadtholder, was very formidable to that prince and his friends. The States of Holland and West Friezeland were the great and constant impugners of the stadtholder's authority and prerogatives. They assumed a superiority which was not admitted by the constitution of the union, and was derived only from the circumstance of Holland possessing a greater share of wealth, and a larger extent of territory than any of the others. The most bitter animosity which appeared against the prince, seemed to be peculiarly lodged in that province; and the city of Amsterdam took the lead of all other places in the invariable display of enmity. The adverse faction had many and great advantages over the Orange party in this contest: for several years they pursued one common object, to which all their measures were directed; thence they were closely united: while their antagonists having no purpose to attain, which might serve to combine their zeal or excite their enterprize, were loose, careless, and unconnected. The opposite party had likewise the important advantage of being favoured by the monied men; they were, besides, quickened by the ardour, and kept in constant exercise by the indefatigable zeal and

Both the aristocratic and democratic parties agree in hostility to the house of Orange.

Advantages which they possessed over the stadtholderian party.

They are supported by the monied men and sectaries.

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and restless spirit[f], which is always observable in sectaries; and though the measure of arming the volunteers had been productive of much trouble and disorder among themselves, yet it afforded them at least the benefit of a formidable appearance.

Circumstances favourable to the prince.

To balance these unfavourable circumstances, the prince was not without considerable means, both internal and external: as captain-general and admiral-general of the United Provinces, he had command of the whole military and naval force of the republic: he had the nomination of all the commissioned officers in either service, and was considered by these as their patron and master; he had also the appointment of most of the civil servants of the state. The landed interest, though a much less proportion of the aristocracy of Holland to the monied, than the corresponding class of England, was, with few exceptions, friendly to the prince in all the provinces; even of the people, great numbers (though not amounting to a majority) were partizans of the stadtholder. But his authority and legal powers were by no means confined to the fleet and army: by his office he was placed as president at the head of most, if not all of the civil departments of the republic. He presided, either in person or by deputy, as he chose, in all the assemblies of the several respective provinces. He had a seat, though not a vote, in the assembly of the states-general; and it was not merely a matter of right, but a part of his official duty, to be present at their deliberations, and to give his opinion or advice upon all matters of discussion, in which he deemed it necessary; and this had not only a great influence upon their proceedings, but in times of harmony, and under a vigorous and successful admi-

He is commander of the army and fleet.

His civil power and authority.

[f] Annual Register, 1786.

nistration

nistration of public affairs, was generally decisive of their conduct. His right of nomination or rejection, with respect to the new members appointed to fill up the town senates and magistracies, was now contested, and generally overruled, but could not fail to have given him by its past operation a great influence in those distinct republics.

He is governor-general of the East and West India companies.

In the quality of governor-general and supreme director of the East and West India companies, the stadtholder, likewise, had an unbounded influence in those great commercial bodies.[g] The prince, moreover, inherited very large estates and possessions, which included palaces, cities, and castles, and endowed him with several important privileges, independent of his offices under the state. Powerful as the aristocracy was, yet the party favourable to the stadtholder had many votaries: even in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and the greater cities of Holland, which were peculiarly hostile to the house of Orange, the domineering faction had to combat numerous adversaries. In the smaller towns the parties approached more nearly to an equality: of the provincial states, Guelderland and Utrecht were devoted to William: Overyssel, Groningen, and Zealand were fluctuating, and disposed to be mediatorial; so that Holland and West Friezeland only were absolutely hostile to the stadtholder. The prince possessed an external resource and support in the friendship and protection of the illustrious Frederic: policy directed a wise king of Prussia to repress the ambition of France, and prevent her from acquiring, under the name of alliance, the command of those provinces, and bound him to the antigallican party; while affinity cemented the bands by which he was connected with the house of Orange. The authority of so renowned a pro-

His hereditary possessions.

Several provinces favourable to his cause.

Friendship and affinity with Prussia.

[g] See Annual Register for 1786, p. 74.

tector,

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tector, long shielded William and his consort from any measures of extreme violence. Such was the state of affairs in the beginning of autumn 1785.

Adverse faction trusts to the protection of France.

The aristocratic faction now found themselves very potent at home, and placed unbounded confidence in the assisting power of France. Proud of this protection, and freed of every apprehension from the emperor, they became less attentive to the admonitions of Frederic himself: they proceeded at once to shew that they were no longer disposed to observe any measures of amity with the prince stadtholder, nor even to preserve those outward appearances which might indicate a disposition to future conciliation. This was announced by divesting him of the government and command of the garrison of the Hague; a measure not more violent in the act, than it was degrading in the execution, through the unusual circumstances with which it was accompanied. The committee of the states issued a decree, by which they deprived the prince of his government and command, forbidding the troops to receive the word from him, to obey his orders in any manner; or even to pay him any of the customary military honours. To render the degradation complete, and as it were to add the incurable sting of a personal insult, they, at the same time, stripped him of his own body-guards, and even the hundred Swiss, who were destined merely to civil purposes, and to the support of state parade and magnificence. A remonstrance of the prince termed this decree a violent breach of the constitution, an invasion of his rights, and an indignity to his person and character; but his complaints produced no other satisfaction than the contemptuous intimation, that the guards were maintained for the purpose of supporting the grandeur of the state, and not for the pageantry of the stadtholder. After such an open indignity, the prince and princess could no longer continue in a city, which was the seat of the court,

They deprive the prince of the command of the Hague.

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public business, and government; as well as the residence of all foreign ministers; they therefore immediately abandoned the Hague. The prince retired to his own city of Breda, and the princess with the children repaired to West Friezeland, where, notwithstanding the implacable enmity of the states of that province, the people were generally well affected to the Orange family. The faction followed their late measure by an order for furnishing the guards with new colours, in which the arms of the house of Orange were totally omitted, and those of the province of Holland substituted in their place. The king of Prussia regarded this personal insult, and violent attack upon the authority of the stadtholder, with great but regulated indignation; he still preserved the most temperate language in his remonstrances; and while his expostulations placed in the fullest light the wrongs and undeserved injuries sustained by that prince, and sufficiently indicated that he was too much interested in his cause to permit him to become ultimately a victim to oppression; yet, for the present, he appeared rather in the character of a friendly neighbour to both, and an amicable mediator, wishing to reconcile the differences and misunderstandings between the parties, than the direct advocate of either [h]: but the faction was too far advanced in violence to regard moderate remonstrances; and proceeded to still greater innovations. They issued an order, that the military honours usually bestowed on the stadtholder, in all his different capacities of captain-general, governor of the Hague, and commander of the garrison, should in future be paid only to the president of their committee, as the representative of the states, and to the grand pensionary of Holland. This was soon followed by an order to discharge all the troops of the province from their oath of fidelity to the

The Orange family leave the Hague.

Temperate remonstrances of Prussia,

disregarded by the faction;

who absolve the troops from their oath of fidelity.

[h] Annual Register for 1786, p. 77.

stadtholder,

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stadtholder, and to prescribe a new oath, by which they were bound to the states only. The faction took the press entirely into their own hands, and the most scurrilous invectives were every day published against the stadtholder; and not only passed with impunity, but received high applause; while the most temperate writings in defence of his rights, or a bare statement of their nature, subjected the publishers and writers to severe and certain punishment. Such was the state of affairs at the end of the year 1785.

THE prince stadtholder, from Breda had repaired to Middleburgh; but finding the faction in Holland had proceeded to extremities, he concluded force would be necessary, resolved to betake himself to the province in and near which his strength chiefly lay; and, therefore, fixed his residence in Guelderland: besides vicinity to his partizans, he there could easily avail himself of the co-operation of Prussia. The faction were not at first sensible of the advantages which must accrue to the prince from the residence which he had chosen, and proceeded in their violence. Great expectations had been formed on both sides, from the assemblage of the states of Holland and West Friezeland, which was to take place at the Hague in the middle of March. When this body was convened, instead of the cool impartiality of a deliberative meeting, it exhibited all the violence and outrage of a mob; and the members appeared to have parted with the phlegm of Dutchmen, and to have borrowed the animated virulence of enraged Frenchmen. In the course of the session, the most important question which was handled by the assembly, was, whether the stadtholder should be restored to the government of the Hague? and after many vehement debates it was, on the 27th of July, carried against the prince of Orange, by a majority of only one; the numbers being ten to nine. The equestrian order, and the

Meeting of the states of Holland and West Friezeland;

violence of.

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deputies of some towns, protested against this resolution as violent, illegal, and unconstitutional. William did not fail to express the strongest reprobation of this conduct of the states: in a letter to that body he denied the legality of one or two provinces presuming to deprive him of a power which had been conferred by the whole confederacy; he did not even acknowledge the right of the whole union to dispossess him of the dignities and powers, which were in the fullest manner rendered hereditary in his family; but without, for the present, investigating that question, he argued, that at least the retraction of the authority should be attended with the same unanimity which prevailed in the donation. The States of Holland, regarding this letter as a defiance, passed a second decree confirming the first. The death of Frederic brought to the throne of Prussia the brother of the princess of Orange, and produced a more active interference to support the interests of the sister, than had been employed while she was only the niece. Soon after his accession, Frederic William sent his prime minister, the count de Goertz, as ambassador extraordinary to the states of Holland; and by him a long letter[1] to the states-general. This paper mingled temperance of manner with vigour of substance, and was in every respect worthy of ministers formed under the wise and resolute Frederic. Its introduction removed the objections which might be made by the states to the interference of a foreign power in their internal affairs. The firm friendship, which for two centuries had subsisted between his predecessors and the republic, would even have demanded his friendly and mediatorial interposition in the present unhappy and dangerous state of their civil dissensions: his situation, as their nearest neighbour, and the vicinity of a part of his dominions to their territories, must necessarily

Remonstrance of the prince.

Frederick William sends his prime minister ambassador to the states of Holland.

[1] See State Papers of 1786, Sept. 18.

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Firm memorial of.

necessarily prevent him from being indifferent to any violent or essential change that was attempted to be made in the constitution of the republic: besides these causes, the near relation in which he stood with the prince stadtholder, and the affection which he bore to the princess his sister, rendered it impossible that he could be unconcerned in seeing them degraded from their high rank and authority, and the stadtholder arbitrarily deprived of his rights and prerogatives; he, therefore, urgently pressed the states-general to interpose their friendly and powerful mediation with the states of Holland and West Friezeland, that the differences between them and the stadtholder might be amicably settled, and the prince restored to his rights and dignities. The application expressed the fullest confidence that the states-general would exert themselves for the attainment of its purposes; and prudently forbore any intimation of the measures which Prussia would pursue, should the letter not produce the intended effects. This representation made a very strong impression on the states of five of the provinces; Holland and West Friezeland vehemently protested against foreign interference; but while they reprobated the interposition of a potentate hostile to their faction, they closely connected themselves with a power that was friendly to the anti-stadtholderian party. The court of Versailles skilfully fanned the flame of discontent by subordinate agents, but her public memorials were couched in so equivocal terms, as to admit of different, and even contrary constructions; and carefully abstained from pledging France to any specific line of conduct. The faction, however, was well assured of the support of France; and by that expectation inflamed to the most insolent violence: they seemed indeed not only to cast off all obedience to their own laws, but every regard to the law of nations. A courier from Berlin to London was stopped, and narrowly

Conduct of France

encourages the faction.

escaped having his dispatches examined by the populace of Woerden. This outrage obliged the count de Goertz formally to demand a passport from the states-general, for a courier he was sending with dispatches to his royal master. The states which were in the interest of the Orange family, strongly remonstrated against the turbulent outrages of Holland, but found their interference made no impression; the standard of rebellion at length was hoisted at Hattem and Elbourg: the states of Guelderland, at the frontiers of which these towns are situated, determined to employ force in repressing revolt; they charged the prince stadtholder, as captain-general, immediately to send a sufficient number of troops, under the conduct of an experienced officer, to these scenes of disturbance, with injunctions to continue there until further orders; but that if the inhabitants were to make any resistance to the performance of this service, such officer was authorized, in spite of all obstacles, to support the sovereign authority of their noble mightinesses, by proceeding to force and violence in the establishment of the garrisons. General Spengler, with four regiments, and proper artillery, was appointed by the stadtholder to this service, with strict injunctions, if possible, to avoid the shedding of blood. The armed burghers of Hattem, being reinforced by as many volunteers as money or party zeal could procure from different quarters, exhibited a great parade of making a most obstinate resistance. Their cannon were mounted on the walls and works; and on the approach of the stadtholder's little army, as they called the regular forces by way of contempt, they fired several rounds of artillery with great briskness, but with so defective judgment in the direction, as not to produce the smallest effect. As soon as Spengler arrived within a proper distance, in order to do the least possible mischief, he pointed his artillery at the chimneys and tops of the houses only;

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Rebellion commences at Hattem.

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1787. The insurgents are defeated.

this, however, along with the bold advance and near approach of the troops, soon produced the desired effect; the armed burghers, with their adherents and auxiliaries, abandoned the town; and Spengler's men entered at one gate, as they were retiring through another. Elbourg was relinquished in the same manner, and with still less trouble.[k] The faction commanded all the public papers, and represented the trifling affair at Hattem as a signal display of republican heroism, worthy of the descendants of those bands which had risen to vindicate their liberty from Alva and Philip; they could have completely routed the soldiers of Orange, but patriotic as well as valiant, they were willing to spare the effusion of the blood of their countrymen. In the same style of delusion, nothing could be more shocking or deplorable than the accounts which they published of the enormities, the plunder, and cruelties, committed by the troops who gained possession of Hattem and Elbourg. The capture of the two towns was represented by the faction as the actual commencement of civil war; and nothing was to be heard but execrations, as well against the states of Gueldres, as the prince stadtholder. In the province of Holland especially, the flames seemed to be blown up nearly to the greatest height at which they were capable of arriving. All regard to forms was now laid aside in completing the deposition by force, of those magistrates, senators, and members of the respective town councils, who were known or suspected to be of the opposite party. Towards the close of 1786, the fortune of the house of Orange appeared to be entirely fallen; but external efforts were made in its favour, which proved ultimately successful. The king of Prussia was incessant in his endeavours to promote all such measures of conciliation, as could in any degree tend to

Conciliatory interposition of Prussia

[k] See Annual Register for 1786, p. 87.

prevent

prevent those unpleasant and dangerous consequences, which the present state of things, and the violence of the republican party, could not otherwise fail to produce. For the attainment of this purpose he shewed himself disposed to try any means, however unpromising, and to coincide with any interests, however discordant, that afforded even a possibility of success.

and of Britain, unavailing.

THE court of London offered its joint mediation with Berlin; but the faction, aware of the predilection of Britain for the interest of the stadtholder, as well as the family of Orange, totally refused her mediation. The king of Prussia therefore proposed that France, the avowed friend and close ally of the republic, should, along with himself, undertake the kind office, but arduous task, of settling and composing the differences by which it was distracted. The court of France professed to receive these overtures with the warmest cordiality; and an ambassador was sent to the Hague for the purpose desired. Though such movements wore the appearance of returning tranquillity, yet it was easily seen that the actual conciliation of the contending parties was very improbable. France, it was conceived, would never really coincide with the king of Prussia in restoring the stadtholder to his power, which the faction regarded with bitter hatred; the king of Prussia would not sacrifice to France the interests of the prince of Orange, by making such concessions as the adverse combination would require. The ministers, however, of France and Prussia entered upon the negociation, which was carried on during the winter months; and though the mediators had agreed in their views and intentions, the objects and notions of the parties concerned were so diametrically opposite, that it would be totally impossible to satisfy both. While contests, begun by an aristocratic faction, were thus distracting the United Provinces, the democratical party, which,

Joint mediation of Prussia and France.

Different views of those powers.

Alarming power of the democratic party;

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1787. is exerted in levelling innovation;

as we have seen, the dissensions generated, was becoming extremely powerful. In Utrecht a government entirely democratical was established; and in Holland the states found, that in stimulating the efforts of the populace, they had called in an auxiliary more formidable than the adversary whom they desired to subdue: the violence and anarchy of mob government now prevailed throughout the provinces. It sometimes fortunately happens, that the desultory efforts of a domineering populace, from unskilful direction, produce effects diametrically opposite to the intentions. The city of Amsterdam from the beginning had been the bitterest and most implacable of the stadtholder's enemies; so that it seemed as if all the violent measures pursued against him, had originated in the pride, malice, and power of those citizens: but Amsterdam suddenly changed sides, and declared in favour of the stadtholder. To detail the causes of this revolution, belongs not to a history which considers the affairs of the United Provinces, only as they affected the interests, or came to stimulate the energies of Britain; and it may suffice to say, that the change produced great alarm in the anti-stadtholderian faction, and eventually facilitated the re-establishment of the house of Orange. The defection of Amsterdam could not but excite an universal alarm among the leaders of the revolutionary party, and urged them to the adoption of every measure that could possibly tend to counteract its effect: for this purpose they proceeded to very violent conduct; and at length resolved to propose a daring measure, which, though they had often meditated, they had not yet ventured to carry into execution:

an attempt to suspend the office of stadtholder.

this was the suspension of the prince of Orange from his offices of stadtholder and admiral-general, in the same manner they had already succeeded in suspending him from his command of captain-general. This question was brought forward on the 10th of January

January 1787, and for two succeeding days occasioned the warmest and most violent debates that had ever been known in the assembly. The proposers, however, found the opposition so formidable, and the aspect of the independent members so doubtful, that they did not choose to hazard the decision of a vote on the question. CHAP. XXXVIII. 1787.

They try a new fabrication of votes.

DEFEATED in this attempt, the faction attempted a new fabrication of votes; but the project was treated with indignant resentment and scorn. The states of Holland, deprived of the co-operation of Amsterdam, and thwarted in schemes of violence, began in spring 1787 to assume a moderate tone, and to adopt measures very disagreeable to the violent leaders of the adverse faction: the cause of the stadtholder became popular, even in the province of Holland. The aristocratic confederates hitherto, as much as possible, repressed the ambition of the democratical malcontents; but now they saw that there was no alternative but acquiescence in their claim, or submission to the stadtholder: on the former they resolved, and called in the armed burghers as their instruments in revolutionizing the state. Such reformers proceeded with the usual fury of a democratic mob. They attacked the assemblies of Rotterdam and other towns, and to produce unanimity drove away by force every member whom they knew or suspected to be friendly to the house of Orange, or enemies to boundless innovation. Encouraged by their success, they carried their reforming projects to Amsterdam; and effected a similar change in the metropolis. During antecedent disorders, the states-general had observed strict impartiality; and it could not be discovered to which side they inclined; but now that an armed mob threatened confusion and anarchy, they thought it was full time to rally round the constituted authorities, in whose downfal their own ruin must be involved.

The armed burghers are employed as instruments of revolution.

Fury of a revolutionary mob.

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1787. The states-general avow themselves supporters of the constitution.

In May 1787, they avowed themselves the defenders of the existing establishments; and now it was no longer a contest between the house of Orange and a party of nobles, but between constitutional order and revolutionary rebellion. The armed populace having forcibly restored the majority of malcontents in the states of Holland, that body assumed to itself powers that could only belong to the states-general. Among the respective partizans frequent skirmishes took place, not without bloodshed. The revolutionary democrats did not confine themselves to personal outrage and savage cruelty, but added robbery: the richest towns of that very opulent country became scenes of pillage.

Disorders at Amsterdam.

In the course of the summer, Amsterdam was a scene of more dreadful devastation, than any European metropolis had exhibited during the preceding part of the eighteenth century; it indeed afforded a specimen to the world of the consequences of a furious love of change, which entirely overleaped every bound of reason and of justice. The states of Holland were extremely anxious to obtain a command of the troops; and the states-general with equal activity, and much greater effect, counteracted these efforts: this, indeed, was the less difficult, as the disposition of the army continued very favourable to the family of Orange; many, both of officers and privates, refused to obey the orders of the provincial states, and ardently desired the restitution of the stadtholder.

The army continues attached to the prince.

The states-general very properly encouraged this repugnance to usurped authority, and took the troops into immediate protection and pay. Colonel Balneavis, a Scottish gentleman of great ability and resolution, by his successful address was the means of recalling the military force of Holland to the service of their prince. Possessing the affection and confidence of

[1] Annual Register 1787, chap. i.

the

the soldiers, he carried with him two battalions to join the stadtholder, and the other regiments immediately followed so laudable an example. But the departure of their troops, instead of intimidating the states of Holland, served only to drive them to more desperate violence.

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The faction becomes desperate.

Amidst all the rage which the revolutionists vented against the government of the house of Orange, the persons of these princes had not hitherto been violated; but the infatuated fury of a mob no longer confined itself within these bounds. The consort of the stadtholder was a princess of vigorous capacity, and intrepid spirit: from the justice of the cause, as well as the late accessions to the party, she conceived that the hour of restoration was approaching, and might be accelerated by a bold and resolute effort. She accordingly determined to leave Nimeguen, unaccompanied by her husband; to proceed to the Hague, and shew herself to the people; she hoped, through the states-general, and other adherents, corporate and private, to effect the restoration of the prince. Accompanied only by the baroness Wassanaar, count Bentick, and a field-officer or two, and attended by a few domestics, the princess arrived at the borders of Holland, near Schoonhoven. Since the departure of the constitutional troops, the revolutionary burghers composed the sole military force of Holland: a party of these surrounded the carriage, and arrested the person of the princess. The commander of this notable troop was altogether worthy of such a corps; a vulgar and ignorant [m] burgher; and, by unmerited authority elated to insolence, this person and his band behaved with brutal irreverence; they conducted the illustrious captive as a spectacle, with all the coarse vociferation of an exulting rabble: even when their barbarous dissonance startled the

Arrest of the princess on her way to the Hague.

[m] See Annual Register for 1787, p. 32.

horses,

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horses, and almost overturned her carriage in a canal, they would not permit the gentlemen of the suite to afford her assistance. At length they arrived at an inn; the gallant captain accompanied the princess to her room; regardless of the presence of a lady, this municipal commander kept his sword drawn; but, her attendants representing the impropriety of such an exhibition, he complaisantly returned it to the scabbard: after this effort of politeness, he sat down by her side, cross-legged, and at the same time ordering beer, pipes and tobacco, enjoyed a comfortable regale, but without being seduced by such appropriate pleasure to intermit the vigilance [n] of official employment.

She is compelled to return.

After being confined several hours, commissioners arrived from the town of Woerden, who expressly told the princess she would not be allowed to continue the journey, but she might retire wherever she chose; accordingly she set out on her return to Nimeguen: the prince, informed of her capture, applied to the states-general for protection to his consort, and satisfaction for so gross and outrageous an insult; and his representation was seconded by a much more powerful applicant: the conduct of the revolutionists towards the princess, was attended with very important consequences.

On this insult the king of Prussia changes his tone.

Hitherto the king of Prussia had acted towards the United Provinces as a mediating neighbour between the two parties: though naturally, and indeed avowedly, favourable to one, he had never intimated a design of forcible interference; but from the seizure of the princess, his relation to the provinces was changed: he was now a powerful brother demanding reparation to a sister; a mighty monarch requiring the satisfaction which he could exact. He sent a memorial to the states of Hol-

[n] The Annual Register mentions some very laughable instances of the assiduity with which the Dutch sentinels kept watch, to prevent female attendants from effecting their escape; see A. R. p. 33.

land,

land, wherein he insisted upon immediate and ample atonement, and also the punishment of the perpetrators: he, moreover, added, that he should estimate the value which they attached to his friendship, by their compliance with this requisition. [a] Before this memorial arrived, the states of Holland had expressed their approbation of the conduct of the persons who had seized the princess: they returned a long and laboured answer; but acknowledged no blame, and proffered no satisfaction. The stubborn injustice of the states of Holland was contrasted by the fair and liberal conduct of the states-general, to whom the king of Prussia had also applied: that assembly declared, that they had made repeated representations to the provincial meeting of Holland on this outrageous insult; that those states themselves must be entirely responsible for measures, in regretting and reprobating which, their high mightinesses perfectly agreed with his Prussian majesty. Frederic was determined to enforce from the states of Holland the satisfaction which they had refused to his requisition: meanwhile he repeated his demand in indignant and peremptory terms, and made a representation of their proceedings to the court of France, to which the faction chiefly trusted. His christian majesty expressed to the states very strong disapprobation of the treatment which the princess had experienced; and declared he thought the king of Prussia very fully justified in demanding ample satisfaction. Notwithstanding this intimation, the revolutionary party persisted in their course; they had no doubt that if affairs came to an open rupture, they would receive from France an assistance proportioned to the danger by which they might be threatened: the Prussian army they knew was strong, but the French army they naturally conceived to be much stronger;

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He demands satisfaction of the states of Holland;

which is not granted.

He determines on force.

The revolutionists rely on France.

[a] See State Papers, August 6, 1787.

and

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and they were too deeply engrossed themselves to consider or estimate internal circumstances in the dominions of their ally, which might prevent the employment of his usual force.

REPEATED remonstrances and replications passed between the states of Holland and the Prussian king during the month of August; but so little to the satisfaction of Frederic William, that he made immediate and powerful preparations for hostilities; and in the beginning of September, an army commanded by the duke of Brunswick was ready to enter the Low Countries. Having in the seven years war[p] ascertained a very high character for heroism and ability, while hereditary prince, from the peace this commander had passed his time in tranquillity, but not idleness, devoting his attention to military and political improvement. On the death of his father, becoming reigning duke, he continued such pursuits as meliorated the condition of his territories. From these meritorious occupations he was now called to head an armament, destined to enforce the purposes of justice.

The duke of Brunswick enters the United Provinces at the head of an army.

On the 13th of September he entered the province of Guelderland, and there the country being all favourable to his attempts, he, without opposition, reached the confines of Holland. On the duke of Brunswick's approach, the revolutionary party applied to France for aid, and obtained a promise of support.

The revolutionists apply to France for aid.

Conduct of Britain.

BRITAIN regarded with anxious attention the important events that passed in the United Provinces, and perceived that the crisis was arrived, when it must be speedily determined, whether the Dutch republic was to resume her ancient and natural connexion with her first protector, or to become a mere appendage of France. Our sovereign, during the course of the disputes, repeatedly offered his

[p] See our narrative of the campaigns of the allies in Germany, in the first chapters of this history, *passim*.

friendly

friendly mediation; but his interposition was extremely disagreeable to the revolutionary faction, which could not stand the award of an impartial umpire. The court of London was confident that the internal strength of the constitutional party, seconded by the king of Prussia, was perfectly adequate to the adjustment of disputes, and the resumption of constitutional rights, if France did not interfere with an armed force. Dignity, justice, and policy, called from his majesty explicit [q] avowals, that he would not remain a quiet spectator of such forcible interference. In these circumstances, the chief object of British policy, concerning Holland, was to watch the movements of the court of Versailles. A message from his christian majesty announced to our king, that he had determined to afford to the states of Holland the assistance which they had requested. Such an intimation demanded only one line of conduct; our king accordingly declared to France, that if she interposed forcibly, Britain should take an active part; and he gave immediate directions for augmenting his fleet and army. A powerful armament was equipped with uncommon expedition: a decisive and grand tone, worthy of mighty power supporting conscious justice, produced the desired effect; and France made no hostile effort to support the revolutionary faction. The energetic vigour of the British cabinet being so successfully exerted towards the formidable ally of the states of Holland, the duke of Brunswick proceeded in a rapid career of victory. The hidden friends of the house of Orange now publicly declared themselves: the revolutionists, however, still entertaining hopes France would not yield, threw themselves into Amsterdam, and resolved to stand a siege; but finding their expectations entirely vanished, they at length

The king of France intimates an intention of assisting the states of Holland.

Our king declares he will forcibly oppose such interference;

and prepares an armament.

France thereupon relinquishes her design;

and the duke of Brunswick is completely victorious.

[q] See his majesty's speech, November 27, 1787. State Papers.

entered

CHAP. XXXVIII.

1787. Restoration of the stadtholder.

entered into a capitulation; the constitutional party proved completely triumphant, and the stadtholder was restored to all his rights and dignities. The discussion which arose between Britain and France terminated amicably, after his christian majesty had declared, that in intimating a design of active interposition in the affairs of Holland, he had never intended forcible efforts.[r] Such was the result of the disputes in the United Provinces, and the measures which Britain adopted respecting the contests. This was the first occasion that displayed the genius and energy of Pitt in foreign policy, and procured him general admiration abroad and at home. Opposition as warmly and loudly praised his conduct, as the rest of the nation: indeed it is difficult to conceive that two opinions could be formed on the subject by any Briton who at once valued and understood the interests of his country. The interference was requisite, to prevent such an aggrandizement of France, as must endanger this country. The means were vigour of tone, seconded by powerful preparation, the most successful instruments which a mighty nation can employ for averting aggression, either direct or circuitous.

Great and unanimous praises of the British cabinet.

[r] See correspondence between the respective ministers of Britain and France on this subject, in the State Papers of October 1787.

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